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HISTORY OF ROME,

AND OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE,

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE INVASION OF THE
BARBARIANS.

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CAPTIVES BROUGHT BEFORE A VICTORIOUS GENERAL (FROM A SARCOPHAGUS AT ROME).

who built them, but of the poets who wrote immoral dramas, and of the spectators who desired licentious entertainments. Even while the popular amusements still kept somewhat of their primitive character, — that of religious mysteries, — the audience loved to laugh at the coarse wit and obscenities with which at the Floral Games the strictest republicans allowed themselves to be amused. What, then, did these customs become in the midst of a populace recruited from former slaves? In the heart of the East, in the voluptuous dances of India or Egypt, we now find something resembling the postures and gestures of the Roman mimes, of the dancers of Cadiz or Antioch, or of her who became the Empress Theodora. Even in Christian Europe, in the royal or princely festivities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there were exhibitions of naked women, sometimes selected from the noblest of the city, like those who at Lille represented before Charles the Bold the Judgment of Paris.¹ In our days the *tableaux* and ballets of the opera are not adapted to form a very strictly virtuous youth. But, thank God! the “realism” of our own days has never reached such a point as to exhibit to an audience a real pyre, actual flames, and in the midst a living man being consumed.²

As regards the games, the Romans did not use them as the Greeks did. At Olympeia the noblest and bravest young men went down into the arena; and to this practice the exercises of the stadium owe a dignity which the Roman games did not possess. In this respect the modern civilized nations are much more truly the descendants of Rome than of Greece. Nor did the Greeks admire those sanguinary sights whither a whole city often thronged to see wild beasts tearing men to pieces, and prisoners, voluntary combatants, men of free condition, senators even, butchering one another for money, for the plaudits of the crowd, for a smile from the Emperor.³ Even Trajan caused ten thousand captives to fight in

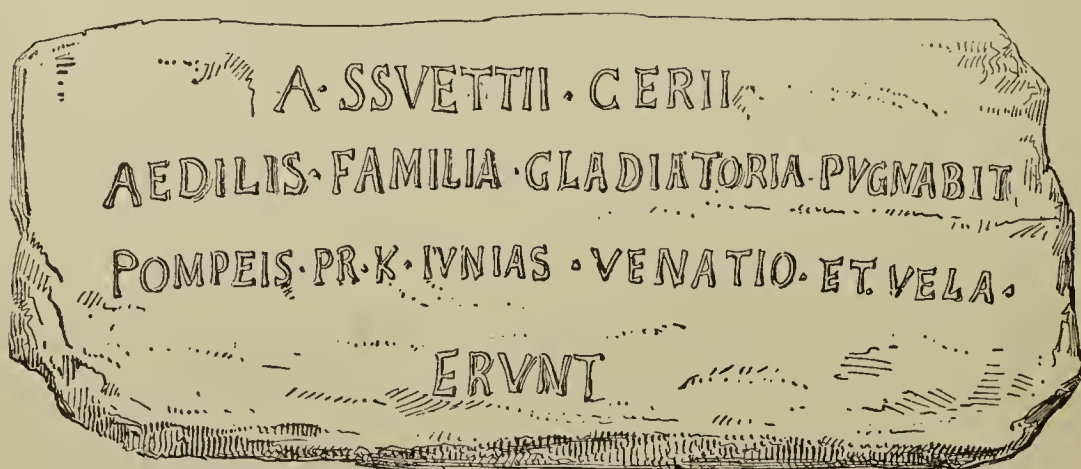
¹ See analogous facts in Friedländer, ii. 302, note 1.

² Suet., *Nero*, 12, and Martial, *De Spect.* 6 and 23. In No. 9 Martial speaks of one Laureolus bound to a cross in the amphitheatre and delivered to a wild beast; in No. 23 of a representation of Orpheus where the actor was torn to pieces by a bear, etc. These men were, it is true, criminals condemned to death. Death by burning was a legal punishment.

³ . . . *Feminarum illustrium senatorumque plures per arenam foedati sunt* (Tac., *Ann.* xv. 32). Cf. Suet., *Dom.* 4; Juvenal, *Sat.* i. 22. Petronius (*Satyr.* 117) has preserved the oath which gladiators had to take: “We swear to suffer fire, chains, the lash, death, whatever he may order us . . . we bind ourselves to him body and soul.”

games which lasted a hundred and twenty-three days. We have seen Claudius assembling twice as many for his sham-fight on Lake Fucinus; and as these unfortunate men showed some reluctance to be killed, legions, machines, and catapults were brought out in order to compel their submission.

Others, on the contrary, gladly grasped the sword, to make their escape from life or from servitude. Some, the most accomplished actors in these bloody games, showed art in their movements and grace in their manner, as they gave or received the deadly stroke. As they fell they still studied their attitude, and died



ADVERTISEMENT OF A GLADIATORIAL COMBAT.¹

with grace. But sometimes also a noble captive refused this degrading conflict, and with haughty look and arms crossed awaited the lion or panther.

When the games were ended, slaves armed with hooks drew the bodies out of the arena and flung them into the *spoliarium*, — a sort of cave under the amphitheatre. Thither came two servants of the amphitheatre, one of whom touched the bodies with a hot iron to see if there were any life in them still, and gave to the care of a doctor those not mortally wounded; while the other finished with blows of a mace those not worth the trouble of trying to save. Two gates gave exit from the *spoliarium*; by the one went forth the living, by the other the dead (*porta sanavivaria, porta mortualis*).

¹ A poster at Pompeii. Translation: "The *familia* of gladiators of Aulus Suettius Cereus, aedile, will fight at Pompeii the last day of May. There will be a chase, and a *velarium* (to keep off the sun)."

The ruins of amphitheatres have been found in seventy cities in Italy.¹ What butchery of human beings for the amusement of the populace!

Yet it was less than we are accustomed to suppose. Every year some hundreds of men, perhaps thousands, perished in the amphitheatres.² But some were prisoners of war, or persons reprieved, to whom a chance of escaping death was offered; others were members of a particular calling, which, like the Spanish *toreador*, wagered life against fortune, — *mortesque et vulnera vendita pastu*.³ We who have suppressed torture, who seek even to conceal from view the execution of the death-penalty, have a horror of these scenes which destroy the moral character of punishment, and no longer see in them justice striking the guilty, but the ferocious delight of a people at its sport.

This is a legitimate disgust. Yet it is right to say that the religious faith which had established bloody games around tombs was not quite extinguished in the time of Commodus, where we find a gladiatorial combat given “for the Emperor’s health.”⁴ Besides, the penal laws of the Romans were of extreme severity; they multiplied indefinitely the cases of condemnation to death, and the law of nations placed the conquered at the mercy of the conqueror. The gladiator was an expensive luxury; to expose a condemned person to the beasts was therefore economy. The assassin, the incendiary, the robber, the sacrilegious, the soldier guilty of mutiny, etc., obliged to slay one another or to fight the beasts, diminished considerably the cost of the games. As regards prisoners of war too rude to be useful for domestic service,

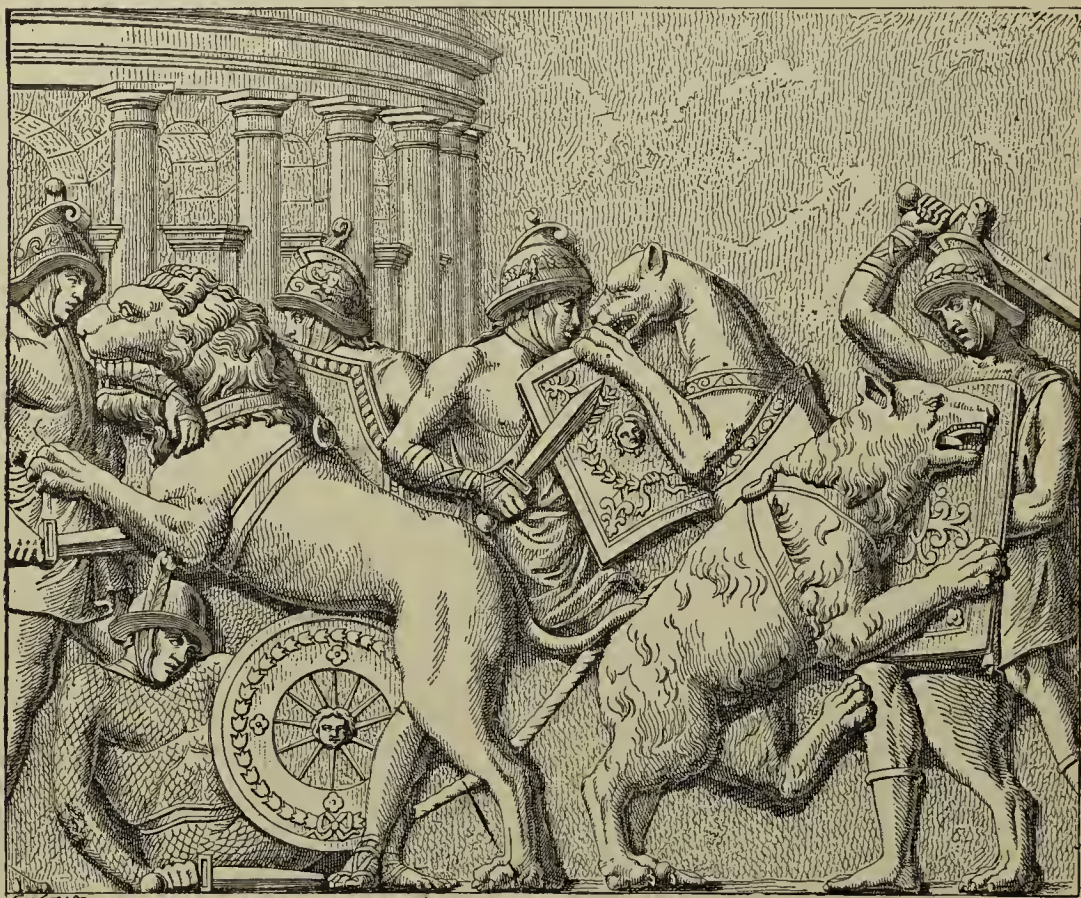
¹ Friedländer, ii. 411–445. The longer diameter of the Colosseum, including the walls, is 616 feet, the lesser 510 feet, the arena 279 by 174 feet. There were seats for eighty-seven thousand spectators; fifteen thousand were able besides to find standing room. Next to Italy, Gaul had the greatest number of these edifices. Fifty-five have been counted, but probably a good number of them were only theatres. Then came Numidia and Africa proper, where traces of twenty have been found, and Spain. We find none in the northern provinces nor in Greece, — Corinth excepted, which was a Roman colony, — and there were very few in the East. In the Middle Ages also a wild beast was sometimes the executioner (Friedländer, after Burkhardt, *Cultur der Renaissance*, 288, 2).

² Augustus says (*Mon. Ancyr.* 22) that ten thousand men had fought in the games given by him during his reign. This would be in forty-four years for the imperial festivities — an annual rate of 115 dead or wounded, one half coming off clear. The gladiators who were only wounded were well cared for, for they represented capital which must not be wasted.

³ Prudentius, *In Symm.* ii. 1,092.

⁴ . . . *Pro salute imperatoris* (Mommsen, *Inscr. Neapol.* No. 4,040).

they were well fed and trained, and then sent to the arena, where their skill and courage saved some of them. The great slaughters took place after fortunate expeditions, — under Vespasian, when Jerusalem fell; under Trajan, on his return from the last Dacian campaign; in the time of Aurelian and Probus, after their triumphs:¹ but the skirmishes which were continually taking place along the frontiers provided captives whom the stern Romans found



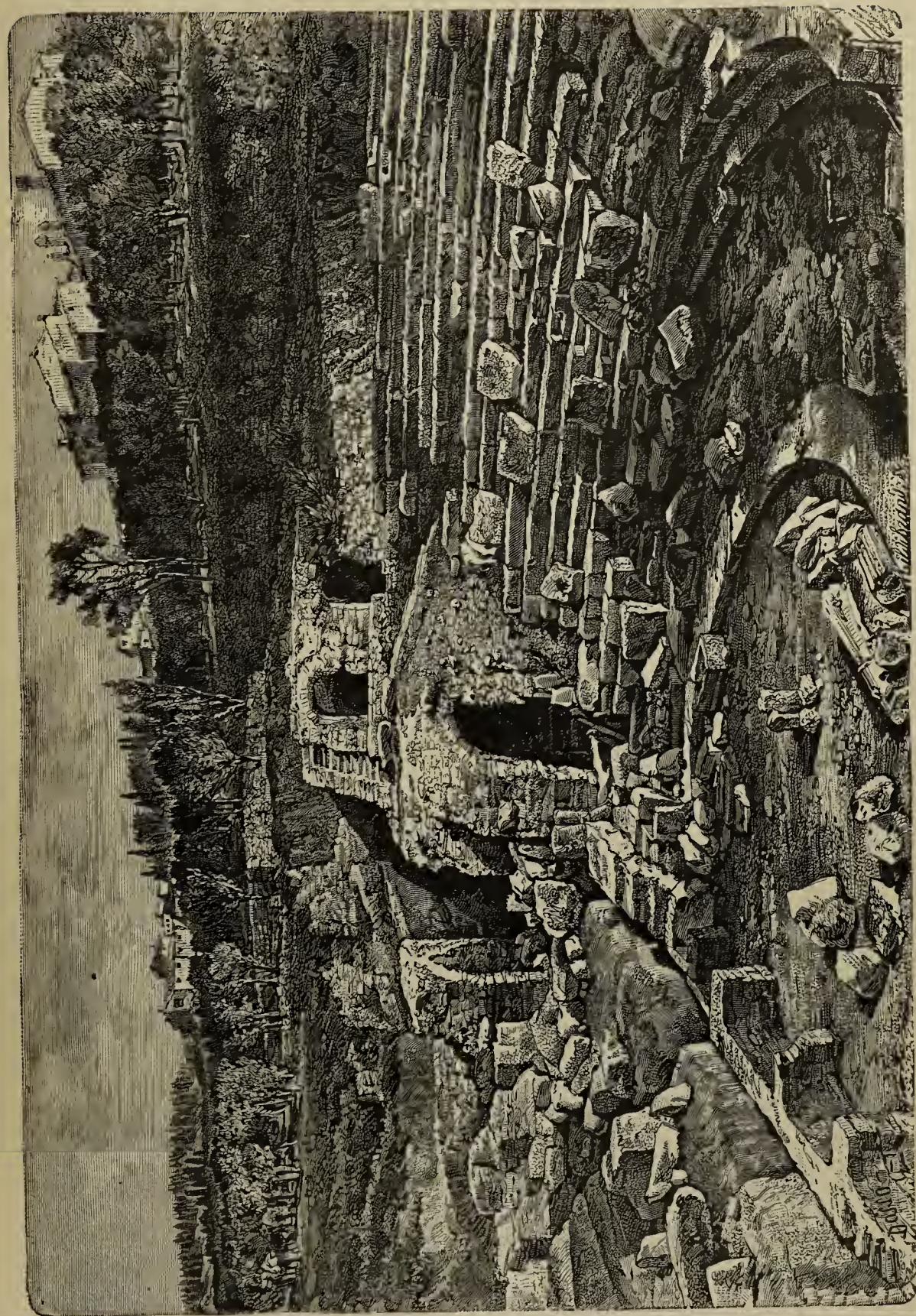
GLADIATORS FIGHTING WITH WILD BEASTS.²

no difficulty in disposing of. Those who seemed docile were enlisted or sold; the rest recruited the bands of gladiators. Even in the Christian Empire the panegyrists of Constantine say: "The perfidy of the Bructeri does not allow them to be employed as soldiers, and their savage nature prevents selling them as slaves; by exposing them to the beasts you have made the extermination of these enemies of the Empire serve for the pleasures of the people. This was the grandest triumph conceivable."³

¹ Vopiscus, *Aurel.* 33; *Prob.* 19.

² *Atlas du Bull. arch.* vol. iii. pl. 38.

³ *Panëg.* vi. 12, 3; viii. 23, 3. An edict of Constantine in 326 disapproved of these



RUINS OF THE AMPHITHEATRE OF FIESOLE.



Not all gladiators perished in the amphitheatre. On every occasion when they fought a good number were saved by their skill, or were healed of their wounds, especially when it was Galen who had the care of them, and some attained celebrity. The heroes of the arena were as popular at Rome as the victors in the chariot-races. Poets sang their praises, painters and sculptors represented their exploits in the palaces, upon the tombs, and even in the temples.

MIRMILLO.¹MIRMILLO (RESTORATION).²

Thus the attraction of peril, the intoxicating stateliness of the spectacle, the applause of the crowd, the desire to win distinction, in the midst of this magnificence, by some famous deed whose reward they would find elsewhere,³ induced young nobles of the equestrian

games, but another of the same Emperor of later date (Henzen, No. 5,580) authorized them at Hispellum. Respecting the continuance of these shows for still another century, even under Honorius, see Cassiodorus, *Varia*, v., ep. 42, and Wallon, *Hist. de l'esclavage*, iii. 421 *et seq.*

¹ Bronze in the Museum of Saint-Germain.

² Museum of Saint-Germain.

³ Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 78; Petronius, *Satyr.* 126; Plutarch, *Galba*, 9; Spartianus, *M. Ant.* 19.

and even of the senatorial order to descend into the arena. The law forbade this, and branded the gladiator with infamy; but the public taste was stronger than the law. The Emperor Macrinus had been a gladiator.¹ The desire of experiencing violent emotions

which is in human nature finds its satisfaction, according to the character of peoples and individuals, in different amusements. This it was which made the intelligent crowd of Athens flock to see the tragedies of Sophocles and Aeschylus, so full of religious terrors; it drove to the combats of the arena the sons of those rude soldiers whose fortune had been made by war, and who seem to have transmitted to their posterity the taste for blood.



RETIARIUS (RESTORED).²



MIRMILLO.³

Some of the actors in these sanguinary games gained wealth; the parsimonious Tiberius offered as much as a hundred thousand sesterces to gladiators of tried merit to induce them to appear in the games, and Nero gave large estates to some of the mirmillones.

¹ Spartianus, *Macr.* 4. Under Tiberius, when the games were rare, Seneca heard a mirmillo lamenting that he was allowed to waste his best years in idleness (*De Prov.* iv. 4). Liberated gladiators who had saved nothing from their gains were sometimes made mendicant priests of Bellona (Schol. in Juv., *Sat.* vi. 105).

² Museum of Saint-Germain.

³ Bronze in the Museum of Saint-Germain.

We might even be tempted to say, at sight of these men bravely engaging in mortal combat, that the populations of the West preserved a manly vigor unknown to those of the East, where these amusements were never popular.¹ Hadrian, the restorer of military discipline, considered these exercises useful, and himself engaged in them : *gladiatoria quoque arma tractavit*.² Titus and Verus did the same ; and if our laws did not prevent it, we should again see volunteer gladiators. A writer of the time of Constantine explains this custom by an idea both religious and warlike. At the opening of a campaign gladiators were made to fight, to accustom the soldier to wounds and to satiate Nemesis with blood.³ In the whole of Latin literature Seneca is perhaps the only writer who regarded these sanguinary games from the modern point of view.⁴ "This wretch has committed murder," he says to a frequenter of the amphitheatre ; "it is just that he should suffer what he has made another endure. But what have you done, unfortunate man, that you should be condemned to be present at such a spectacle ?" This perversion of the moral sense in men like Cicero and the younger Pliny would be incomprehensible, had we not seen the most gentle minds justify the Inquisition and applaud the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Even morality is a work of time, which by slow elaboration separates in the human heart true feelings from evil passions ; and a man is not always more meritorious for being better, when his goodness is simply due to his coming later into the world.⁵

¹ We find this thought in Pliny (*Pan.* 33) : *Spectaculum quod ad pulchra mortis vulnera accenderet contemptumque* ; even in Lucian (*Anach.* 37), who disapproves of gladiatorial combats, but represents Solon as saying to Anacharsis that a law of Athens obliges young men to be present at cock-fighting, in order that, at sight of these birds struggling to the very death, the desire to brave death in their turn might be kindled in their souls.

² Spartian, *Hadr.* 13 ; for Titus, Dion, lxi. 15 ; for Verus, Spartian, *M. Ant.* 8 ; for Didius Julianus, Spartian, 9, etc.

³ Capitolinus, *Max. et Balb.* 8.

⁴ *Epist.* 7. On the attraction of these spectacles, see the curious history of Alypius related by Saint Augustine (*Confess.* vi. 8).

⁵ The laws which govern our actions as moral agents are eternal, and not a principle in ethics has been discovered which Plato did not know ; but the knowledge of these laws is not the same at all times, nor at any given period, for all men.

V. — EXAGGERATIONS OF THE MORALISTS AND POETS IN THEIR
DESCRIPTIONS OF ROMAN SOCIETY.

WERE private morals at all better than this portion of public morals? Yes, and no, according to what we look at and whom we accept as authority. Regard only Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, the festering centres of an immense agglomeration of men, where are developed even more moral maladies than physical ills, and you will find all the accusations true. It will be the same if you believe the statements of the moralists, who see everything in black, and the comic and satiric poets, who see everything distorted; because it is the rule for the former always to condemn the present, to the advantage of the past, and of the latter to study exceptional cases, to take social monstrosities as the faithful representations of the whole of society. Where a slight shade would be just, they put a harsh tone, which exaggerates the relief; and, like them, we perceive only what thus stands out. A tranquil, decent life, without signal virtues or vices, that every-day life which is most common among men, is no more attractive to these writers than the dull level to the traveller seeking the rude charms of mountain scenery. These authors are eloquent and artistic, but not always truthful, and they have their justification, since eloquence and art are beautiful, and moreover useful, warning all men, and correcting those who err. But they show us only a part of the picture, instead of the whole; and when their method is applied to all periods, each in its turn appears censurable. Seneca in his day ridiculed those men who were forever calling their contemporaries to account.¹ “Morals are gone; evil triumphs; all virtue, all justice is disappearing; the world is degenerating! This is what was said in our fathers’ days, it is what men say to-day, and it will be the cry of our children.”

Let us take for example a vagabond’s epic, the *Satyricon* of Petronius, a singular book recalling the indecent buffoonery of Rabelais. It is human life in Nero’s time, critics say. This is

¹ *De Benef.* i. 10. Letter 97 is still more explicit. “Our youth,” he says, “is better than that of former days.”

true; but it is the life of the slums through which the author leads his heroes, — jail-birds, men utterly demoralized, to the point even of being no longer conscious of their own degradation. Tacitus and even Suetonius leave all this infamy under a certain shadow; Petronius and Juvenal place everything in the full light. This picture is a page of history, but it is a history which repeats itself wherever youth, gold, and the vacuity of a useless life meet.

Petronius, supplemented by Martial, Apuleius, and Juvenal, has brought much ill fame upon Roman society. But these writers, who have been taken literally, sought above all to amuse and to make men laugh, and certain worthy people have been willing to be amused, tolerating the shamelessness of the story for the sake of its cleverness. In the days of the *Précieuses* the great Condé liked to have the *Satyricon* read aloud to him, and now Molière seems to us coarse. A few years later, Madame de Sévigné sent her daughter the *Tales* of La Fontaine, which she admired, but which we no longer read; and a minister, Comte de Pontchartrain, collected for his own library, as pleasing curiosities, the books which the parliament caused to be publicly burned.

As every large city has its sewers, so every large society has its impurities. France is justly proud of the elegant and noble society which gathered round Louis XIV.: it was her *grand siècle*, — a time of heroic soldiers, upright magistrates, saints and martyrs, men of letters and of science who are the honor of France; but in that same period we also find hypocrites, whom Molière and La Bruyère chastise, noblemen who cheated at cards and would have had no scruples about throwing their serfs to the fishes, ladies of rank who robbed their tradespeople, or who carried on their shameless and venal gallantries in the *pays de Braquerie*,¹ magistrates who accepted bribes, peculating ministers, — in fine, all the crimes which the archives of the Bastille reveal to us.² Under Nero, Locusta taught the art of poisoning; but in the best period of the Renaissance Italy was called “the Poisoner,” and in France during the time of the Valois and the Brinvilliers the art of causing a human being to disappear was carried to perfection. In the trials of La Voisin, the Abbé Guibourg, and Canon Dulong, the inquiry was abandoned,

¹ See the *Works* of Bussy-Rabutin.

² See the *Arch. de la Bastille*, by Fr. Ravaisson, 6 vols. in 8vo.

to avoid finding guilty parties even in the King's palace. But does this mean that for this glorious period we must seek the representatives of France in the Bastille and in houses of ill-fame? Assuredly not. What we do as regards our own history, let us then do for that of the Empire.

The *Satyricon* gives a large amount of space to the most hideous pictures; but I shall select only such as are presentable, and some features of that provincial life which the historians, so occupied with Rome, absolutely leave in the shade. Let us first look at Trimalchio, — that counterfeit Lucullus, a type of the fortune-makers of the time, who practises usury, although he has millions, beats his wife Fortunata, in spite of her services, and commits barbarisms in his language although he always has hungry rhetoricians at his table. With the sententious gravity of a man who, after having made a large fortune, tries to assume an elegant style, Trimalchio relates how from a slave he became a freedman, from a servant a master.

“When I first came from Asia I was no taller than this candlestick, and to make my beard grow I used to rub my lips and chin with lamp-oil. But I served my master and mistress diligently for fourteen years, so he made me co-heir with Caesar, and I came in for a senator's fortune. Man is never satisfied! I wanted to enter into trade; I built five ships and freighted them with wine, — at that time worth its weight in gold. They were all wrecked. Do you think I was discouraged? By Hercules, no! I built other ships, larger, better, and more fortunate, so that everybody said I was a man of pluck. Fortunata behaved like a wife on this occasion: she sold all her jewels and her dresses, and put a hundred gold pieces into my hand. What the gods will is soon done; by one trip I gained ten millions. I immediately redeemed all the lands that had been my patron's; built a house; bought cattle to sell again; everything thrived under my hand like a honeycomb. After I came to have more wealth than my whole country is worth, I withdrew from commerce and began to lend money on usury to freedmen.”¹

He is right to possess this calm tranquillity, for when once arrived at the top, and installed in the midst of wealth, no one

¹ *Satyricon*. 75, 76.

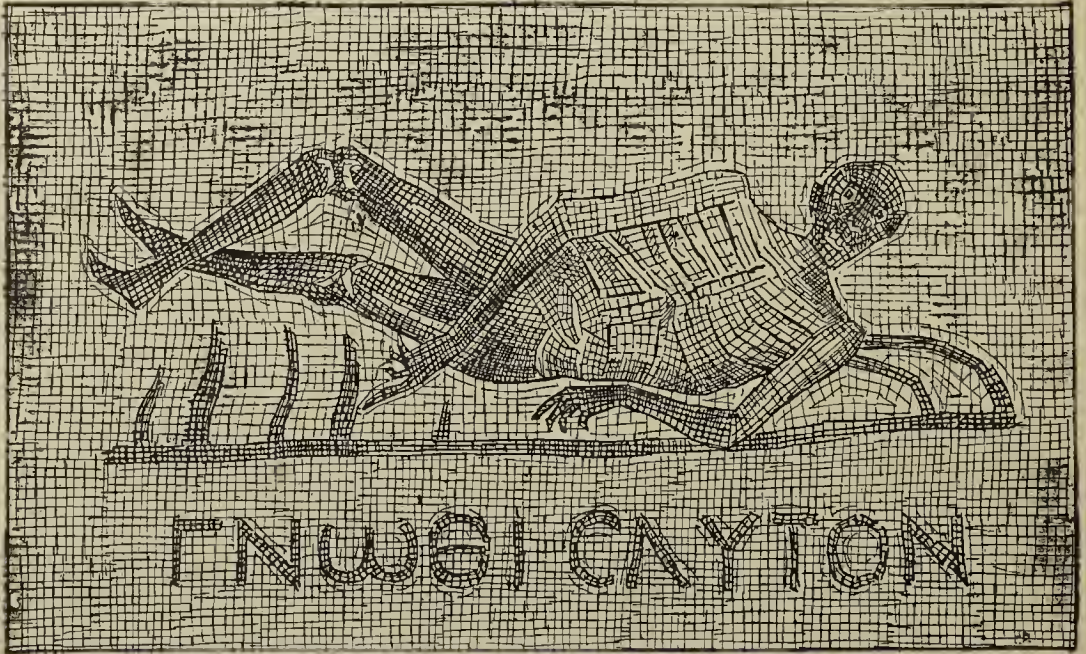
will ask him how he arrived there. Gold ennobles everything; it is the supreme god. How can men help holding its priests in consideration? "Trimalchio has lands enough to weary a kite in his flight;¹ his money begets more, and his slaves—good gods! there is not one in ten who would know his master. He buys nothing; everything is produced in his house,—wool, wax, pepper. You might ask for pigeon's milk, and it would be brought you. Happy fellow is this Trimalchio! He lies late in his ivory bed while the eager crowd of his clients kick their heels at his gates. At last he deigns to show himself; he addresses a few words here or there, and favors the privileged with a nod. Order the litter! the slaves! Trimalchio will go to the Forum. If the weather is fine he rides on a costly mule. On the road he stops to make a visit: the retinue of clients stops, and awaits him in the mud or in the sun; he continues his way, they run after him. And yet this Trimalchio is only a freedman. Till quite lately he carried wood on his shoulders. Whence this respect by which he is surrounded? He possesses eighteen million sesterces. How did he get them? Nobody knows; but he has them,—that is the important matter. Stand aside, then, when he passes, and win his good graces if you can. Trimalchio knows his own importance: see how he admires himself draped in his flowing toga! The large sleeves are carefully drawn over his hands hardened by servile toil. What a sudden change! The other day the blows rained on his shoulders; now he is honored and revered. He speaks loud, and men listen; he will say plenty of silly things: but no matter, his fortune serves as intellect for him."

A worthy precursor of all those whose fortunes have outgrown their minds, Trimalchio expends his money ostentatiously on sumptuous feasts, in which he aims to astonish his guests by his uncouth luxury and his recently acquired learning. He quotes Homer and Vergil; he extemporizes poetry and philosophy. In the midst of the orgies he commands a silver skeleton to be brought in, which inspires him with this fine sentence: "Such we shall soon be; therefore let us live while we can live well."² But he is more

¹ Juvenal, *Sat.* ix. 55.

² *Ergo vivamus dum licet esse bene* (*Satyr.* 34). It was the practice to recall the idea of death in the midst of festivities, not to suggest grave thoughts, but by way of contrast,

ridiculous than wicked even, — in some respects, he is better than the men of the preceding age; and I pardon some eccentricities in him when I hear from the depths of his dull soul an echo of sentiments which were beginning to be diffused, and must indeed make their way, since they have been able to pierce this money-bag: “My friends, slaves are also men as we are; they have sucked the same milk as we, though an ill fortune has borne them down.



SKELETON, WITH THE SOCRATIC MAXIM, “KNOW THYSELF.”¹

However, without prejudice to myself, mine shall soon drink the water of the free; I emancipate them all in my will.”

Chrysanthus has not reached so high a position, but he too has lived well, as the world understands it. Let us see what this was, according to Petronius and certain of his contemporaries: —

“He had the lot which he deserved, — he lived well and died well: what, therefore, has he to complain of? He began the world with nothing, and to his latest day he would have picked a copper coin out of the mire with his teeth. But his fortune grew daily. By Hercules, I believe he died worth a hundred thousand solidi in

to heighten the enjoyment. Cf. Martial, *Epigr.* v. 64. M. Perrot found at Koutahia, in Phrygia, a mortuary inscription which represents men who lived like Trimalchio. “I tell my friends: Give yourselves up to pleasure, to voluptuousness, live. You must die, therefore drink, enjoy, and dance” (*Galatie*, p. 117).

¹ Mosaic in the Kircher Museum at Rome.

ready money. . . . How many years do you think he buried with him? Over seventy; but he was as tough as horn, and carried his age wondrously. His hair was as black as a crow. I knew him when he was a young fellow no better than he should be, and such he was to the last, — not that I blame him. The pleasure of having enjoyed was all that he carried out of the world with him.”¹

Enjoyment! It was a common word in those days, as it is now.² But how certain traits in this description, and the animation of the style, remind one of La Bruyère!

Listen now to this street-brawler, who thinks only of his own needs, who values only what secures to him his pittance, and if this fail him, rails alike against heaven and earth. “All day long,” he says, “I have been without a mouthful of food. I feel as if I had fasted for a year. A curse on the aediles, who are playing into the hands of the bakers! And the poor suffer while these rich rascals live in continual enjoyment. Oh! if we still had those good fellows that I found here on my return from Asia! Living was abundant in those days; it was like being in the heart of Sicily for plenty, and they knocked about those vampires, the aediles, in such style that Jupiter was their friend no longer. There was Safinius, I remember him well: he was a pepper-corn, not a man, he made the ground smoke under him wherever he went; but he was a downright honest man, a friend to his friend. And then in the curia how he pounded them up, one and all! His voice swelled in the Forum like a trumpet. I believe he had something of the Asiatic in his blood. And what a civil man he was! He returned every one’s salute; he called every man by his name, as if he had been one of us. Provisions were cheap in his time; for an as you had more than enough to eat for two. Now the loaf for an as is not so big as a bullock’s eye. Alas! alas! things grow worse every day. The colony is growing down, like a calf’s tail. And why should it not? We have an aedile not worth three figs, who prefers an as to the lives of us all. He laughs at us when he is at home; for he gets more money in one

¹ *Satyr.* 43.

² Hear La Fontaine: “‘Enjoy yourself.’ ‘I will do so.’ ‘But when will you begin?’ ‘From to-morrow.’ ‘Ah! my friend, death may seize you on the road; begin to-day . . .’” (*Fables*, VIII. xxvii.). Cf. Hor., *Carm.* II. xiv., and Martial, *Epigr.* i. 16.

day than another man's whole fortune comes to. I know where he took a thousand gold denarii. Oh, if we had a little pluck, he would not hold his head so high! But the people are like this nowadays, — lions at home, but foxes abroad.”¹

We have all heard this demagogue ourselves, for such as he are found at all times; but in those days he stopped at mere laments, and did not get so far as an outbreak. He had, moreover, a trait of character which our demagogues do not possess, — he is religious, or seems to be so, and seeks to stir up the devout as well as the idle and the needy.

“What is to become of us if neither gods nor men show pity to the colony? Heaven help me! I believe that all this happens by the will of the immortals! For nobody now believes that heaven is heaven, or keeps a fast, or takes account of Jupiter; but all shut their eyes, and only trouble their heads about what they are worth. Formerly the women with bare feet, floating hair, veiled face, pure-souled, went up the hillside to pray Jupiter to send rain, and it came down in torrents, and all rejoiced. Times are changed; because we are irreligious, our fields lie barren.”²

But do not take Petronius at his word; he knows as well as Lucretius what his divinities are worth. “Now those who are bound by vows, as much as those who would sell the world, emulously make to themselves gods who shall be propitious to their wishes.” They had invented one which in all ages is sure of worshippers, — Gain. An inscription at Pompeii in mosaic, at the threshold of a house, called upon the visitor in crossing it to do honor to the divinity, the protector of fruitful industries, — *Salve Lucru*.³

VI. — STRICTNESS OF MORALS IN THE PROVINCES AND HIGH SOCIETY.

WE have already remarked the outburst of immorality in the last century of the Republic; at the period of the Antonines this society, which such great wealth, suddenly and badly acquired, had unsettled, calmed down again. The enormous fortunes having been

¹ *Satyr.* 44.

² *Id.*, *ibid.*

³ One of the two lares of Trimalchio was *Lucro* (*ibid.* 60).

dissipated, and the means of making them again having ceased to exist, manners changed. The Romans were no longer parvenus squandering wealth and honor like men suddenly enriched, and social life resumed its regular course. Moreover, the whole Empire was not comprised in Rome. As we read the satirists and poets, we seem to forget, as they do, all the honest men who were living honorable, quiet lives, far from the great cities, and who composed the mass of the Empire's population, — a solid but dull background not clearly seen, from which the vices, passions, and unhealthy ambitions of the time stood out in glaring colors because immorality is always conspicuous, while good conduct attracts but little notice.

Doubtless with a religion which prohibited nothing, and slavery, which facilitated everything, and the most demoralizing public shows, which were frequented by women as well as men, the laws of morality, ill-defined and feeble, could do little to restrain vulgar minds. Moreover, men have seemed to suppose that the whole Empire was assembled at Nero's festivities and seated at the feasts of Vitellius, as it has been thought that all France, a century and a half ago, had the morals of the Regency and supped every evening like the Duke of Orleans.¹

But abundant evidence proves to us that if we could penetrate into the midst of the provincial populations, even into some of the great families at Rome, we should find those morals which accompany moderate fortunes and desires, or dignity and refinement of character. Tacitus speaks of "those who had come from remote municipal towns and occupied that part of Italy where strictness of manners and primitive simplicity were still preserved;"² and he exhibits these provincials staying for a time at Rome, chief men sent as a deputation to the Senate, or simply individuals who had come on private business, as unable to endure the sight of a dissoluteness which was new to them (*lasciviae inexpertis*). The *novi homines*, he says again, "who were called from the provinces to the Roman Senate, brought thither the economy and order of their private life." Massilia seems to him "a place where Grecian

¹ The recollections of the Maréchale Princesse de Beauvau, whose maiden name was Rohan-Chabot, exhibit in the very midst of the eighteenth century the purest morality and, I ought to add, the noblest sentiments, conjoined with the most complete religious scepticism.

² *Ann.* xvi. 5. See, in Appian (*Bell. civ.* iv. 39, 40), the conjugal devotion of several matrons at the saddest period of the Republic.

politeness and provincial frugality are happily united ;” and before celebrating the exploits of the provincial Agricola, his father-in-law, he paints in a few words his private virtues : “ He married Domitia Decidiana, a lady of illustrious descent, from which connection he derived credit and support in his pursuit of greater things. They lived together in admirable harmony and mutual affection, each giving the preference to the other.” We are not surprised, therefore, to see that Tacitus attributes a change in the morals of the Roman nobility to the advent of provincials to high public functions.¹

On this subject Pliny holds the same views with Tacitus ; the former’s mother was from Hither Spain. “ You know,” he says, “ what the reputation of that province is, and what severity of manners reigns there.” And in speaking of Brixia he says : “ . . . That part of our country which still retains and preserves the ancient modesty, sobriety, and rustic simplicity. . . .” Again, “ You know also the austere manners of the Paduans.”² Listen to Martial even, the Spanish poet to whom Rome had seemed the only place worth living in, because there ready verse-making opened the gates of the great. Feeling old age creeping on, and his scanty poetic vein drying up, this frequenter of the Palatine and Esquiline became rustic. He now celebrates the simple, frugal life of the country. “ Here, I must nourish my land ; there, my land will nourish me.” And he would like to leave the banks of the Tiber, where “ even hunger is expensive, where you wear out four togas in a summer, while in the country one lasts four seasons.”³ He regrets the house of his birth, where the table was covered with the rich spoils of the paternal fields, which would make him so rich with so little, and he finally returns thither.

Unhappily Tacitus did not think of painting this provincial life, because quiet prosperity does not supply those gloomy or glittering colors which the great artist preferred. Yet athwart his narratives and those of his contemporaries amiable and honest faces look out upon us from the background, and Pliny’s correspondence admits us to the best company. Ideas in this society, like those of the man

¹ *Ann.* iii. 55 ; *Agric.* 4. Cf. Pliny, *Epist.* i. 14 ; *Agric.* 6.

² Martial (*Epigr.* xi. 16) confirms this reputation of the Paduans.

³ *Ibid.* x. 96. He passed at least thirty-four years at Rome (*ibid.* 103).

who introduces us to it, are, it is true, not very elevated; but the most worthy sentiments prevail there, and we meet none but men with whom we should willingly live. First of all Pliny himself. It is easy to criticise the governor of Bithynia, the writer who thought himself the rival of Cicero and Demosthenes as he balanced his empty periods, the orator who, measuring eloquence by the clepsydra, is very proud of having spoken seven hours at a stretch; but if Pliny is not a great man, he is most certainly a very courteous one, always ready to give his money or his advice, loving what is good, decent in manners, and anxious to do nothing and say nothing unworthy of himself and of his consular toga.

Who are his friends? Tacitus, a very thoughtful personage, who must needs have had the virtues which he expected from others; Quintilian, whom Pliny aids in giving a dowry to his daughter, and whose great work is as much a book on education as on rhetoric; Suetonius, whom the governor often entertained,¹ and whose tastes, like his fortune, were very moderate, if we may form an opinion from the property he wanted to acquire. "This estate tempts my dear Suetonius in more respects than one,—its nearness to Rome, the convenience of the roads, the small extent of the buildings and of the land, which divert but do not take up much time. Learned men like him need an avenue to walk in, a vine of which they can know every branch, and some shrubs, the reckoning up of which will not be difficult or long." These are men of letters who do not run after wealth, who show mutual affection, and whose lives were such that history lays to their charge nothing to diminish the esteem which they bestow on one another.

Do we want a philosopher? Euphrates is unknown to us, and possibly we have no occasion to regret the loss of his works; let us at least preserve the portrait which Pliny draws of this moralist,—amiable, serious, but not morose, wise without pride, who, most unlike those brawling, long-haired philosophers whom Lucian will presently criticise, makes war against vice, not men, and leads back to virtue by mildness, in place of repulsing by insult. But for the moment let us look at him at home. "His sanctity of life is remarkable, and so is his affability. Three children

¹ . . . *Probissimum, honestissimum, eruditissimum virum et mores ejus sequuntur et studia* . . . (Pliny, *Epist.* x. 96).

compose his family, two of them sons, whom he has brought up with the utmost care. His father-in-law is Pompeius Julianus, a man of great mark as well in the general course of his life as, above all, in this one particular, — himself a magnate of his province, with a choice of many brilliant matches he chose for his son-in-law one who was a magnate, not in rank but in wisdom.”¹

From literary men let us pass to men of the world, and we shall find some marked forms of character. Corellius Rufus² had all that could make life enjoyable, — a good conscience, the highest reputation, a wife, a daughter whom he loved, and sincere friends. He had prolonged his existence to nearly seventy by the purity of his life; and when an incurable disease made him a burden to others as well as himself, he resolved to put an end to his sufferings. In vain was he besought to give up the fatal determination. “I have made my decision,” he said, and he allowed himself to die of hunger. Titius Aristo did the same as Rufus. “I am distressed,” writes Pliny, “by the long and persistent illness of Titius Aristo, the object of my especial admiration and regard. . . . To me he is a treasury of knowledge. How weighty are his observations, and how modest and becoming his caution! . . . Add to this his abstemiousness at table and the sobriety of his attire. His very chamber and his couch always seem to me when I look at them to present an image of antique simplicity. . . . He lately summoned me and a few others of his most intimate friends and begged us to consult the doctors as to the issue of his illness, so that if it were incapable of yielding to treatment he might withdraw from life by his own act; if, however, it should be merely obstinate and protracted, he might fight against it and remain.”³ These men, who tranquilly balanced life and death, became their own judges, and passed the fatal sentence upon themselves, are most unlike Martial’s debauchees or the knaves of Petronius, and could not have lived as they. Add Thræsea, Helvidius, the elder Pliny, Agricola, Verginius Rufus, who declined the Empire, Cornutus Tertullus, a man every way worthy of it, Pegasus, “the very religious interpreter of the laws,” Trebonius Rufinus,

¹ *Epist.* i. 10.

² *Ibid.* i. 12.

³ *Epist.* i. 22. One of Domitian’s friends, Festus (*Martial, Epigr.* i. 79), a celebrated juriconsult, Caninius Rebilus (*Tac., Ann.* xiii. 30), did the same.

duumvir at Vienna, who suppressed the games in that city, Junius Mauricius, who proposed that they should be suppressed at Rome, and a crowd of others whose virtues have remained in obscurity, like the devotion of the soldiers who lived and died unnoticed on the frontiers in the discharge of their duty.

Pliny knew well the will-hunters, and relates the misadventures of one of them, Aquilius Regulus, the most celebrated of the profession, who, having obtained sixty million sesterces, expected to double the sum.¹ But his letters prove that there were also people capable of refusing estates left them by will, and of accepting onerous legacies, and executing, to their own loss, codicils which were not obligatory.² Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius, had set an example of the greatest simplicity of life; it was a tradition in this humbly born family. The biographer of Antoninus says of this Emperor's father that he was upright and pure (*integer et castus*), and of his maternal grandfather that he had been irreproachable (*homo sanctus*).

Where did Juvenal find the women who pose in his gallery of wantons? Just where they still are found,—near theatres and dens, in the Tuscan quarter, where, as Plautus had already said, “those are to be met with who sell themselves,”³ — “where the vile crowd collects,” adds even Horace, who was not very severe.⁴ Yet Rome had seen different morals, even in that imperial palace so disgraced in the time of Caligula and Claudius, Nero and Domitian. Under Augustus, Livia, indulgent towards her husband, but severe towards herself, and Octavia, whose renowned chastity not a breath of suspicion ever touched; under Tiberius, Antonia and Agrippina, worthy objects of public respect; under Trajan, Plotina, whose virtue was a strength for her husband; and if I do not place the two Faustinas on this list of honor, it is from a compliance which history ought not to exhibit for accusations probably calumnious. When Seneca, who was born at Cordova, shows us his mother as having been “brought up in a strict home,” and his aunt during the sixteen years that her husband governed Egypt

¹ *Epist.* ii. 20. This Regulus had property in Umbria, Etruria, and the Roman Campagna, — another proof of the divisions of properties (Martial, *Epigr.* i. 12, 82; vii. 31).

² See also in Tacitus, Rubellius Plautus (*Ann.* xiv. 22).

³ *Curcul.* IV. i. 478.

⁴ *Sat.* I. iii. 229.

as being "unknown in the province," we may believe that his filial affection sought a resemblance between the women of his family and those of old days.¹ But he knew others who recall ancient manners, — Marcia, for example.² And how many do we find in Pliny and Tacitus who, after having been, as Atticus Herodes says of his wife, "the light of the house,"³ will forever continue an honor to their sex, as Antistia and Servilia, who, unable to save their father, die with him, and that Pomponia Graecina, a woman of illustrious birth, whose life remains a sad and touching mystery. United in close friendship with Julia, daughter of Drusus, whom Messalina forced to kill herself, she wore mourning for forty years, and was never seen to smile. Did this distaste for Roman life and its dangerous honors predispose her to receive the new faith? She was at least accused of yielding to foreign superstitions. Doubtless in order to save her, her husband, Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, claimed the right to judge her himself in the presence of his nearest relatives, according to the ancient forms of domestic government. This tribunal declared her innocent; and as the occurrence took place in the better years of Nero,⁴ the sentence was accepted. But Graecina kept her sadness and probably the secret hope of a life where all the noble feelings of tender and pure hearts could expand.

Arria's husband, Caecina Paetus, and his son were affected with a serious malady; the son died. His mother took such measures respecting the funeral that the father knew nothing of it. Every time she entered his room she gave him news of the sufferer, — he had not slept badly, or perhaps he was recovering his appetite; and when she could no longer restrain her tears she went out for a moment, and then returned with dry eyes and calm face, having left her grief behind her. At a later period her husband, being concerned in the conspiracy of Scribonianus, was captured and taken to Rome. He was put on board ship, and Arria begged the soldiers to allow her to go with him. "You cannot refuse," she said to them, "to a man of consular rank a few slaves to wait on

¹ *Multum erat si per XVI annos illam provincia probasset; plus est quod ignoravit* (Consol. ad Hel. 17).

² *Mores tuos velut antiquum aliquod exemplar aspici* (Consol. ad Marc. 1).

³ *Tò φῶς τῆς οἰκίας* (C. I. G. No. 6,184).

⁴ In the year 57 (Tac., Ann. xiii. 32).

him and dress him; I alone will do him these services." As they continued inexorable, she hired a fishing-boat and followed across the Adriatic the vessel in which her husband was conveyed. At Rome she met the wife of Scribonianus, who attempted to speak to her. "How can I listen to you," she said to her, "who have seen your husband killed in your arms, and who are still alive!" Foreseeing the condemnation of Paetus, she determined not to survive him. Thrasea, her son-in-law, begged her to give up this determination. "Is it your wish then," he said to her, "if I should be compelled to die, that your daughter should die with me?" "If she shall have lived as long and united a life with you as I with Paetus, it is my wish," was the reply. Her family watched her carefully, to prevent her fatal design. "You are wasting your time," she said; "you will make me die a more painful death, but it is not in your power to prevent me from dying." Thereupon she dashed her head with such violence against the wall that she fell down as if dead. When she recovered her senses she said to them: "I have already warned you that I should find some way, however hard, to death if you denied me an easy one." We cannot wonder that, to decide her hesitating husband, she struck herself a fatal blow with a poniard; then handed him the weapon, saying: "Paetus, it gives no pain."¹ These are brave women.

Do we desire a simpler affection, a less theatrical devotion? Listen to Pliny: "I was sailing lately on our Lake Larius, when an elderly friend pointed out to me a house one of whose rooms projected above the waves. From that spot, he said, a townswoman of ours threw herself out with her husband. The latter had long been ill, suffering from an incurable ulcer. When she was convinced that he could not recover from his disease, she exhorted him to kill himself, and became his companion in death,—nay, rather his example and leader, for she tied her husband to her and jumped into the lake."² Not even her name is known. Another woman manifests that proud dignity which permits no hesitation on the question of duty. A lady had determined to send a considerable sum of money to a friend of hers who had been banished by Domitian. It was represented to her that this money would inevitably fall into the tyrant's hands. "It is of little consequence," she

¹ Pliny, *Epist.* iii. 6.

² *Ibid.* vi. 24.

said, "if Domitian steal it, but it is of great moment for me to send it."

Paganism also greatly honored what seems to us by no means peculiarly a pagan virtue, — chastity. Ceres, Vesta, whose legend is so pure and beautiful, desired priestesses like themselves; and the most respected persons in Rome were the women consecrated to the two chaste goddesses. Even Apollo had a priestess at Argos who was permitted no other love but the divine.¹ At the festivities the Vestals were seated in the front rank, and the reigning Empress took her place with them.² There is a great space between women such as these and Martial's licentious heroines, or Eppia, the consul's wife who fled to Egypt with a buffoon!

This society also knew women whose hours were not entirely devoted to the *mundus muliebris*. In certain houses literary circles were held, at which great ladies discussed Homer and Vergil, as at the Hôtel de Rambouillet it was the custom to discuss the *Cid* or the latest madrigal. Rome had its *précieuses*, even its *femmes savantes*, and Juvenal and Martial laughed at them before the days of Molière;³ but it had also the charming women, whose witty and refined conversation elevates the minds of their hearers. "Pompeius Saturninus has lately read me some letters which he says are from his wife. I fancied myself listening to Plautus or Terence in prose. Whether they are his wife's, as he affirms, or his own, as he denies them to be, he is entitled to equal credit: in the one case for producing such compositions; in the other for transforming his wife, a mere girl when he married her, into such a learned and finished woman."⁴ Sulpicia, a patrician lady, the wife of a philosopher, and honored by contemporaries for the purity of her life, was a renowned poet. A few lines written by her are still extant, — a vigorous satire against the edict of Domitian exiling the philosophers; but we have lost her poem on conjugal love.⁵ The

¹ Pausanias, *Corinth.* ii. 4.

² Tertullian (*De Monog.* 17) says that even as late as his time when a married woman became a priestess of Ceres she voluntarily separated from her husband.

³ Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 434–456; Martial, *Epigr.* ii. 90, 9.

⁴ Pliny, *Epist.* i. 15. The house of Statius seems to have been also a very delightful home. Cf. *Silv.* iii. 5.

⁵ Sidonius Apollinaris (ii. *ep.* 10) has given a list of women poets at Rome; Balbilla is known to posterity by her verses scratched on the statue of Memnon

very mention of Sulpicia's name made Martial look grave; he himself speaks of a young lady, betrothed to his friend Cassius, who had the eloquence of Plato, the austerity of the Porch, and composed verses worthy of a chaste Sappho.¹

This enumeration might be continued at great length, and mention be made of Polla, Lucan's widow, whose inconsolable grief has been painted by Statius;² of Fannia, whose virtues Pliny admired; of the wife of Minicius Macrinus, who lived thirty-nine years with her husband without a cloud rising between them; or of Spurrinna, a man of consular family loaded with years and honors, who lived in the country with his aged wife, each resting on the other's affection, to finish together "the evening of a fair day."³ In Agricola's house we have seen a similar spectacle.⁴ We have but a glimpse allowed us into the house where Persius did himself honor by his manly poetry. What virtues, what delicate tenderness are to be found in and around him!⁵

Let us finish with the portrait which Pliny draws of Calpurnia, his young wife. To please him more, she studied polite literature, learned his books by heart, set his verses to music, and accompanied them on her lyre. "How great is her anxiety when she sees me going to speak in court, and how great her joy when I have spoken! She sets messengers about to report to her what favor and applause I have excited, and what is the result of the trial. Then whenever I recite she sits hard by, separated only from us by a curtain, and catches up with eager ears the praises bestowed on me." Then let that tender letter be read which he addressed to her, and that in which he speaks of marriages not at all resembling the unions which the comic poets describe, since here on both sides the families have care only for honor and virtue. From all that he

¹ vii. 69.

² *Silv.* ii. 7.

³ See two epitaphs in Martial (*Epigr.* x. 63 and 71), and in Statius the poem (v. 1) addressed to Priscilla's inconsolable husband, who, contrary to usage, refused to burn her body, but inclosed it with spices in a marble tomb, where it is said to have been found in 1471. Nigrina, after the example of the famous Agrippina, herself brought from Cappadocia to Rome the ashes of her husband: *Rettulit ossa sinu cari Nigrina mariti* (Martial, *Epigr.* ix. 31). An obscure soldier did the same for his wife.

⁴ Pliny says nearly the same thing of Plotina and Trajan (*Panegy.* 83). See (*Epist.* ii. 14) the picture that he draws of the life of a family.

⁵ Cf. Martha, *Une famille patricienne sous l'empire*, in his book entitled *Les Moralistes*, p. 130.

enables us to see of Roman life, we find that the women had in their families much the same position that they have in our time. They are seen to be surrounded by affection and respect. "What more do you want," he writes to a friend, "since you have now your wife and your son?"

We also possess the correspondence of Fronto. Owing to the indifference of this Numidian, who became a consul, and his trivial taste in literature, his letters furnish nothing of any use for history. Still, with him we again find ourselves in good company. It is an ordinary intellect, held in leading-strings by rhetoric, but an honest heart, loving tenderly all his kindred,—his aged wife, his grandchildren, his brother, and son-in-law. Let us ask nothing more from him than this, and let us place him in our gallery of upright men, along with those noble friends of Hadrian who have been already mentioned,—with that Gavius Maximus, "a man of grave, austere manners,¹ a Roman of the old days," who in the reign of Antoninus held for twenty years, without in any way staining his honor, the formidable post of praetorian prefect.

It will be said, "These men were very few in number." That is possible; Rome in this respect resembles all countries. However, from Cato to Marcus Aurelius, with Thræsea between, we find an uninterrupted succession of noble characters. The moral value of a society is marked by the degree of elevation which its best men attain, and by the level at which the great mass arrive. The former give us the measure of the moral capacity of the people and show us the ideal which is set before them; by means of the latter we understand the facilities or the hindrances which social influences and education—taking this latter word in its broadest acceptation—have placed on the road leading to this ideal. Now Roman Stoicism is one of the noblest creations of the human mind, and the facts set forth in this work prove that Roman society—certain aspects being set aside—had as much merit as many others have which rank themselves far higher in the scale of morality.

These facts, these individuals, belong also to the great families of the times. But let us look below them, as we have looked out-

¹ *Epist.* vii. 5; *Ibid.* i. 14, vi. 26; *Ibid.* v. 18. *Vir severissimus* (Capitolinus, *Ant. Pius*, 8).

side Rome. Let us descend into those humble dwellings, "where are tolerated neither dice and immodest dances, nor adultery and the infamous amusements which the nobles consider fashionable living." Let us enter these poor houses whence issue "the clever men who conduct the law-suits of the ignorant patrician, and the brave youth who hasten to defend the Empire on the Euphrates or the Rhine."¹ In those homes dwelt a middle-class which, then as now, was urged to labor and to economy by a scanty fortune, but of which, unhappily, we have no history. We see clearly that it is this class which ploughs the land and sea, which produces and trades, which by its industry makes the wealth of the Empire, and by its spirit of order the tranquillity of the provinces. But to know anything of its sentiments we are obliged to read the inscriptions on its tombs.

No people has left so many of them: we might say that it is a class of literature peculiar to the Romans. They are often in verse, and assume every style, every form. We find in them philosophy and religion, faith and scepticism, raillery, bitter regrets, and very little hope. Each man relates his life and expresses his feelings. At one time the dead man addresses the passers-by, warns them that they, like him, are but dust and ashes, or he commends to them his tomb and threatens them with a penalty if they do not respect it.² There are even dialogues. Here is one between the family and the Manes: "Be favorable to us," say the kindred; and the Manes reply: "And do you give to those who are here what is due to them; give to Death." Upon which the deceased interrupts and says: "If the dead have anything, it belongs to me; all the rest I have lost."³

But we seek in these inscriptions only certain details of manners. If many of them lie, like a funeral oration, like the tears of an heir or the eulogiums of a successor, some show a real sorrow. You hear a heartrending cry; especially you see, by what they praise, the virtues from which this society constituted the ideal of woman: "Amymona, wife of Marcus, was good and

¹ Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. 39-55.

² "Whosoever shall deposit in this sarcophagus another corpse, shall pay to the colony of Philippi a thousand denarii and two hundred to the informer" (Heuzey, *Mission de Macédoine*, p. 38). There were many others similar.

³ Henzen, No. 6,457.

beautiful, an indefatigable spinner, pious, reserved, chaste, and a good housekeeper.”¹ “She spun wool and looked after the house.”² Possibly the dead woman in reality had not been endowed with these virtues; but as they read these mortuary inscriptions every time they went in and out of the city gates, along the Road of the Tombs, the living learned what was expected of them, and more than one shaped her life accordingly. Here a dead wife is honored for having married only once (*univira*);³ there one who had always shown herself ready to help.⁴ Primus says of his wife: “She was dearer to me than life;”⁵ another: “She never caused me any regret, except by her death;” another: “Her virtues should be written in letters of gold.”⁶ Here we feel distrust of the pompous language. A widow regrets not having preceded her husband to the tomb;⁷ a husband declares solemnly that after having lived eighteen years with his wife, without the least cloud, he will never invite another to replace her at the domestic hearth.⁸ . . . It is not certain that he kept his promise, but it is well that he made it. At Berytus, Rufus Antonianus erects “to the most devout and virtuous of women” a marble statue, “in order that she may serve as an example.”⁹ I prefer these simple words, engraved on the tomb of a freedwoman by the surviving husband in the name of the dead: “I await my husband” (*Virum expecto meum*), and I am pleased to find this inscription in Gaul.¹⁰ Here is another, which surely was sincere: “O holy Manes! I commend my husband to you. Be very indulgent to him, that I may be able to see him

¹ Orelli, No. 4,639.

² *Domum servavit, lanam fecit* (*Id.* No. 4,848); *lanifica, domiseda*, etc.

³ Orelli, No. 2,742.

⁴ L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 1,987: *univira, omnibus subveniens*; and this is not an expression in epitaphs only: among the virtues that the elder Seneca recommends seeking in one's wife, he desires that she be able to bear with her husband the ill that may come upon him, and besides that she be charitable, *misericors* (Havet, *Orig. du christ.* ii. 232). In a pagan inscription at Koutaiah, a certain Philomnia is styled the “friend of the poor” (Perrot, *Galatie*, p. 119), as was the freedman of Serranus, under Augustus.

⁵ *C. I. L.* vol. i. No. 1,103, and Marini, *Inscr. Alb.* p. 100.

⁶ Or.-Henzen, Nos. 4,626, 4,530, 7,385, 7,386.

⁷ *Id.*, No. 7,388.

⁸ Or.-Henzen, No. 4,623. On the pompous but sincere grief of Atticus Herodes on the death of his wife, see Vidal-Lablache, *Hérodès Att.* p. 65. The collections of Orelli-Henzen (*Sepulcralia*, Nos. 4,576–4,663 and 7,401–7,414) and of L. Renier (*Inscr. d'Alg.* Nos. 1,766, 1,767, etc.) contain some touching funeral inscriptions.

⁹ De Sauley, *Voy. autour de la mer Morte*, p. 21.

¹⁰ At Narbonne (Orelli, No. 4,662).

in the hours of night.”¹ Servilius Fortunatus must have loved his wife most fondly, since he brought “her remains from the depths of Dacia, across land and sea,” to the foot of Mount Aurasius.² I know well what the elder Pliny, Ovid, Seneca, and so many others, without speaking of Juvenal, say of marriage. All these ill-natured sayings, more or less philosophic, did not prevent Cicero from taking a second wife, nor the younger Pliny and Ovid from marrying three times.

At Rome there has been found on a tomb these words: “On the day when my dearly beloved spouse died I gave thanks to men and gods.” Here we have either a bad wife or a bad husband,—perhaps two ill-disposed persons; but if this epitaph be accepted as genuine, why should not others receive similar credence?³

In those days, as now, it was not uncommon for whole families to go on pleasure-trips, and many long journeys were undertaken to renowned shrines or places of interest. The speaking statue of Memnon, in far distant Egypt, attracted many persons who came to listen to the son of Aurora and who brought to him the greetings (*proskynema*) of their friends or relatives. In the verses which Gemellus cut on the Colossus he says that he is there, “with his dear wife Rufilla and his children.” Another goes there with his sister; Trebulla regrets the absence of her mother; Aponius, that of his wife; N., that of his brothers. On the Pyramids a Roman lady has written: “I have seen them without you, O dearest of brothers! Remembering you, I have shed tears, and I write here my lament.”⁴

Quite a little poem, found on a tomb at Cagliari, recalls the devotion of a new Alcestis, Atilia Pomptilla, who offered herself to the gods to redeem the life of her husband, in danger of death. We do not know how the sacrifice was made, but the husband, “surviving with regret,” attests the miracle while ardently asking that his soul may soon be again united to that of the tenderest of wives.⁵

¹ *Id.*, No. 4,775.

² L. Renier, *Mél d'épigr.* p. 218; *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 1,169.

³ See in vol. ii. p. 682 of Wilmanns the references to innumerable sepulchral inscriptions, which certainly are not all mendacious.

⁴ Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, vol. ii. Nos. 361, 365, 368, 378, etc.

⁵ Ἐπευχόμενον διὰ παντὸς συγκεράσαι ψυχῇ πνεύμα φιλανδροτάτη (*Voyage en Sardaigne*, by

It would be appropriate to quote the whole of the funeral eulogium¹ of a noble lady whose husband recounts at length the virtues, the sweetness, the intelligent piety, and the indefatigable devotion which never for a moment failed during forty-one years. By dint of prudence and courage she saved her husband when proscribed by the triumvirs and pursued by the implacable hatred of Lepidus. Then, seeing the union continuing sterile, she spoke of a divorce: "Thou didst offer to give up this house to a fruitful spouse, to seek out a companion for me whose children should become thine. Thou desiredst to leave thy property at my disposal, ready to render me, if I accepted them, the attentions of a sister or an affectionate mother-in-law." Here is a new form of divorce which Martial does not mention. It has been said that the ancients knew no other form of love than the sexual passion; this is still another opinion which must be given up. The mother of Pertinax, unwilling to be separated from her son, at that time only a prefect in the fleet, accompanied him to the cold and foggy coasts of the North Sea, where she died a victim to her maternal love;² and we read of another who left the warm climate of Africa to accompany to Armorica her son, a marine.³ But it would be an insult to human nature to seek for proofs of filial or paternal affection; this exists in all times. I prefer to call attention to the fact that the alimentary tables of Velleia furnish a confirmation of the words of Tacitus respecting the strictness of provincial morals. Out of three hundred children assisted, only two are *spurii*. Did these illegitimate children participate in this charity by special favor? Nothing obliges us to believe this to be the case. But if no more were found among the poor of three districts, must we not admit that, at least in the country, the morals of the contemporaries of Trajan were quite as good as our own?⁴

the Comte la Marmora, 2d part, *Antiquités*). M. le Bas has criticised this inscription, which belongs to the first century A. D. (*ibid.* pp. 570-586), and he cites another of the same kind, the heroine of which, Callieratia, is still less known: "Ἀλκηστis νέη εἰμι θάνον δ' ὑπὲρ ἀνδρὸς ἐσθοῦ Ζήνωνος. . .

¹ *Laudatio funebris*. The woman who is the object of it is Turia, wife of the ex-consul Q. Lucretius Vespillo; of the family of the poet; her death took place in the year 9 or 10 B. C.

² Capitolinus, *Pertin.* 2.

³ L. Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.* p. 255. See the same in the *Inscr. d'Alg.* Nos. 3,864, 3,981.

⁴ The proportion of illegitimate to legitimate children in France is 8.45 to 100, or 7.46 per cent of the whole number of births (*Statistique de la France*). The total of the *spurii* in

These sentiments, these facts, are besides in complete accord with those prescriptions of the law and those precepts of philosophers which place the wife on an equality with the husband. Musonius and Plutarch, with many others, speak in praise of marriage; they desire "numerous families, to give to the state useful citizens, to the world creatures able to comprehend the harmonious wisdom of its laws, to God faithful servants of his temples;" and the public conscience had accepted this teaching.

VII. — IMPROVEMENT IN MORALS.

IN the chapters on the Family and the City we have already shown how morals had improved in this great community, the Empire. Many other facts could be added to this proof. Let us mention some of them. At Fidenæ, the circus fell in, and fifty thousand persons, it is said, were killed or wounded. In telling this sad story Tacitus takes the opportunity to contrast the spectacle of republican Rome nursing the wounded from its great battles with that of imperial Rome relieving the wounded in the circus.¹ Yet he is forced to let us see also the multitude hastening from Rome to rescue the sufferers, the houses of the great which are thrown open to receive them, the physicians who were called in, the aid organized, — in a word, the generous impulse of public compassion to alleviate the distress of the sufferers. We are justly very proud of our national subscriptions to repair the damage done by some public disaster. This custom was habitual in the Empire. Aristeides relates that the catastrophe at Smyrna, which was destroyed by an earthquake, seemed to the whole province of Asia a

Germany is higher. Dion Cassius, on entering upon the consulship, found three thousand charges of adultery. This total will not seem very great for a hundred million men, if it is recollected that the law permitted all comers to stand forth as accusers, and that it even provoked accusations by assuring a reward to the *delator*. French law, on the contrary, authorizes only the complaint of the parties. Moreover, out of the 8,223 demands for separation introduced in France during 1873, there were only 278 based on adultery, the complainant preferring to bring forward in open court other reasons. We see also that the number of unhappy marriages causing public scandal is more considerable among us than in the Empire, which is explained by the existence of divorce at Rome.

¹ *Ann.* iv. 62.

public calamity. The cities united together in sending, by land and by sea, to the inhabitants who remained amid the ruins of their native city, what they needed. The others were received into adjacent cities, provisions and carts were sent out to meet them, and collections were made everywhere for their assistance.¹ Campania, as we know, acted similarly after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79, and Lyons was not the only provincial city which in Nero's time helped to rebuild Rome.² The historians of that time were not interested in collecting facts like these. Yet enough of them have come down to us to show that the recommendations made to governors of provinces on behalf of the poor were not, in that society, a discordant anomaly.

It has been considered a very touching instance of humanity that the laws of certain barbarous nations make it no crime for a pregnant woman to pick fruit from an orchard while going along the road. The Roman juriconsults, whom we are accustomed to represent with the severe countenance of implacable Justice, do not manifest these delicate traits of consideration; yet to constitute a theft they require the intention of stealing.³ So that expounders of the law in the Middle Ages felt themselves authorized by certain juridical texts to say that a thing taken from necessity was not a thing stolen; and this doctrine was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church.

The furious madman is not as yet regarded by the Romans as a sick person who must be healed if possible; but neither is he what till 1789 he was in France, — a man condemned by Heaven. They did not suffer a child or an insane person who had committed murder to be punished by the law. "The one," say they, "is excused by his ignorance, the other by his misfortune."⁴ In a fit of insanity one Aelius Priscus had killed his mother; Marcus Aurelius wrote to the judge: "He is sufficiently punished by his madness."⁵

According to Catholic discipline, the excommunicated person

¹ . . . *Pecuniae collationem, καὶ πολλὰς φιλανθρωπίας εἰς δύναμιν τὴν ἐκάστων γενομένης*, in the *Palinode on Smyrna*, i. 429; Dindorf's edition.

² Tac., *Ann.* xvi. 13.

³ . . . *Furtum sine dolo malo non committitur* (Gaius, *Comm.* iii. 397). Cf. *Digest*, xlvii. 2, 46, sect. 7 and Law 76; and P. Viollet, *Bibl. de l'École des Chartes*, 1873, p. 336.

⁴ *Digest*, xlviii. 8, 12, and Title 9, 9, sect. 2.

⁵ *Digest*, i. 18, 14.

cannot enter the Church, nor can his body be laid in consecrated ground. The Emperor — who was at the same time the sovereign pontiff — allowed the proscribed to leave their place of exile in the Cyclades to go and take part in the religious festivals of the large cities on the Asiatic coast,¹ and he allowed the Christians to bury their dead where it pleased them.²

To conclude, philosophy had destroyed the principle of slavery by developing this truth, — now universally accepted in the Roman world, — that nature makes men equal, and that legal servitude is simply a misfortune.³ All the arguments employed in our days against slavery are to be found in the books of Seneca, Epictetus, and Dion Chrysostom. In the fourteenth century the English insurgents put this question, —

“When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?”

Long before them the elder Seneca had said: “Look among the ancestors of a noble, and you will find a man of naught.”⁴ We note the progress made by the new doctrine when we see what the *instrumentum vocale* of Cato had become.⁵ Apart from its vicious principle, Roman slavery considerably resembled modern domestic service, and very often between master and servant there existed more confidence and affection than is seen in our times. What tender friendship Cicero manifested for his slave Tiro, and Pliny for his nurse! Those slaves whose duties kept them habitually with their master formed as it were a part of the family. “As I know the humanity with which you treat your servants,” Pliny writes to Paulinus, “I do not hesitate to confess the indulgence which I show to mine.” Zosimus, “a person of great worth, diligent in service, and well skilled in literature,” having strained his lungs by too vehement an effort of his voice in declamation, had been sent by Pliny into Egypt, whence, after a long absence, he had lately returned. But having again exerted himself, for several days together, beyond

¹ Plutarch, *De Exil.* ii. 604, Didot's edition.

² This liberty, which Signor Rossi mentions repeatedly in his *Roma sotterranea*, has secured the success of his excavations and enabled the Church to recover her martyrs.

³ Seneca, *Epist.* 47.

⁴ *Quemcumque revolvēs nobilem, ad humilitatem pervenies.*

⁵ See above, pp. 1 *et seq.*, the new legislation relative to slaves.

his strength, he was reminded of his former malady by a slight return of his cough and a spitting of blood. "For this reason," writes his master, "I desire to send him to your farm at Forum Julii, having frequently heard you mention the fine air of the place and recommend the milk as very salutary for all disorders of this nature.



AN EGYPTIAN SCENE.¹

. . . I beg you to write to your people to receive him into your house and supply him with all that he needs, which will not be much; for he is so temperate as not only to abstain from delicacies, but even to deny himself the necessities his health requires. I shall furnish him with money sufficient for his journey."² And on another

¹ Mosaic in the Kircher Museum (*Gazette archéol.* 1880, pl. 25)

² v. 19. The same sentiments are found in the letter viii. 1.

occasion he writes: "The illness which has lately carried off several of my domestics has deeply afflicted me.¹ I have, however, two consolations, which, though they are inadequate to so considerable a loss, are still consolations. One is that as I have always very readily set free my slaves, their death does not seem altogether untimely if they lived long enough to receive their freedom; the other, that I have allowed them to make a kind of will, which I observe as religiously as if they were legally entitled to that privilege. I obey their last requests as so many absolute commands, suffering them to dispose of their effects to whom they please; with this restriction only, that they appoint as their heirs some of the household (*familia*), which to people in their station may be regarded as the commonwealth whereof they are members."

At another time we find him writing to his friend Fabatus that he will endeavor to persuade the proconsul Tiro, on the way to his province, to stop at the house of Fabatus, in order to furnish an opportunity, by the presence of a magistrate, for the legal enfranchisement of certain slaves. This is done, and Pliny shortly after writes to congratulate his friend on the event. "I rejoice," he says, "that the arrival of the proconsul was acceptable to you, and that you made use of the opportunity which his presence afforded; for I wish to see our city (Comum) improved by every possible means, and particularly by an increase of citizens, since that is the best ornament a city can receive."²

Pliny would not have spoken thus had it not been that he himself and Fabatus and the public generally regarded many of those held in slavery as in every respect suitable to become citizens after they had been properly trained for that rank by the care and wisdom of their masters.

That this opinion was very widely held is also proved by the great number of testamentary manumissions,—a number so very great that it became necessary to limit it by law. The will of Dasumius has been already mentioned, and the provisions made by him for the comfort of his freedmen in their future lives. The language employed is not as noble as that used by Pliny, but the sentiments are the same, and we find them expressed in

¹ viii. 16.

² *Oppidis firmissimum ornamentum*, vii. 32.

other wills which have been recently discovered.¹ Think also of the habitual duties of the freedman, — his patron's confidential man of business, intrusted with all the latter's most secret affairs, carrying out his plans, acting as his agent.

Finally, the public expressions of affection between slaves and their masters and between freedmen and their patrons are so numerous in inscriptions that considerable collections of them have been made, wherein the simplicity of real grief and sincere regard are apparent.²

At what conclusion do we then arrive on the question of the morals of this period? Shall we say that Juvenal represents it falsely, and that Pliny gives us all the truth? Neither statement would be accurate. The latter was a man of integrity, and his friends were men like himself; the former was a poet, who, to attract the attention of a public wearied with sentimentality, gave his muse an angry voice and a scowling look. The truth lies on both sides. Roman society was like all communities which have attained a high degree of wealth and culture: it had scandalous vices and noble virtues; profligates, and men of the highest character; Messalinas, and women who were faithful to their husbands in life and death; mad spendthrifts, and well-ordered families who wisely employed their wealth; humane masters, and those who, had they not been restrained by the new laws, would have treated their servants with all the rigor of the ancient days.

Many writers have passed these domestic virtues by as if unaware of their existence. Some have done so because it pleased them better to follow the poets and story-tellers, however vile

¹ That, for example, of Opimius at Philippi (Heuzey, *Mission de Macédoine*, p. 41), constituting his mother heiress, and bequeathing, after her death, to his freedmen and their descendants various pieces of property, on condition that the lands should never leave the family (*familia*) and that the revenues should be used for the support of the freedmen and the keeping up of the tomb. See also the curious will found at Basle, *Annali dell' Instit arch.*, 1864, pp. 200 *et seq.*, and Statius, *Silva*, i. 2; Martial, *Epigr.* i. 102.

² Gruter fills not less than seventy-two pages folio (pp. 930–1002) with a collection of the *affectus servorum et liberorum erga patronos, inter se et in suos* and the *affectus dominorum et patronorum erga servos et liberos*. The prizes for virtue yearly bestowed in France prove the continued existence of these feelings between masters and servants. But any one who is intimately acquainted with the condition of the Roman world at the period of which we write will acknowledge that master and servant, employer and workman, are much less friendly towards one another to-day than they were then.

the places through which these authors led them; others, because it was their determination to exhibit this great Roman community as the sink of the world.

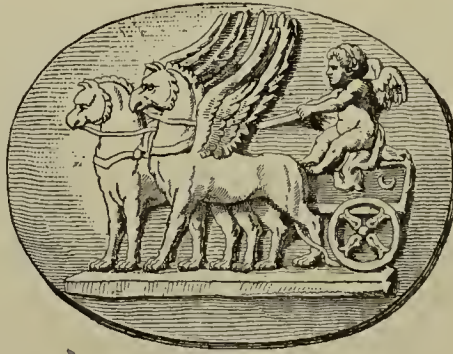
It is quite natural that, having had its mortal enemies as its heirs, this society should have been for fifteen centuries depicted in the darkest hues; and the more for this reason, that with the facilities which despotism gave the Emperor, and slavery and religion gave to all, the ancients showed an indulgence towards vice which very fortunately is unknown among us. What we conceal, they allowed to be seen. Now, to hide one's misconduct is a kind of half virtue, since it proves shame and sets no bad example. Appearances are in our favor, and there can be no doubt indeed that we are sounder at the core. But ought we from this to entertain such pride as to feel nothing but contempt for these men who lived so long ago? We have seen that moral depravity was confined to the few; we cannot, therefore, hold it responsible for the fall of the Empire. Moreover, though we may confess it reluctantly, it is not private morals, if we take the expression in a restricted sense, which save a state or destroy it. When immorality does not go so far as to brutalize the mind, it never has on the exterior life the influence that has been attributed to it. Even in the soul of the profligate there remain forces which can raise him from his degradation. How many such have been seen to act as heroes, how many pleasure-loving men have met death bravely! Let us preserve our respect and homage for those whose lives are irreproachable; but when we seek for the causes of the grandeur or decadence of a people, let us above all study their public morals and their institutions.

Every nation has its share of vices,¹ and everywhere moral monstrosities are found, men born with tendencies towards gross licentiousness or crime, who are, in fact, merely beasts in human form. Of all such the Empire had its large share. What it

¹ See on this subject Bouillier, *Morale et progrès*, in cap. xv. "Religious," says M. Maury, "strengthen the observance of the moral law, but do not guarantee it;" and he shows us that the Middle Ages and modern times have, in spite of the excellence of Christian morality, nearly as many vices as Greek society. He infers, as we have done in regard to Roman society, that it would be unjust to distinguish, in treating of the religious morality of antiquity, between precepts and acts, since this is not done in Christian society (*Hist. des relig. de la Grèce*, iii. 63).

lacked was never justice in its laws, intelligence in men, obedience in families, order in the cities, but character; and it lacked this because in Roman society that which makes the dignity of man, liberty, was absent. Human nature, however, still preserved its rights, appearing in sentiments, even to a certain point in morals; and nowhere in the world then known did men labor more or think more than they did in Rome. When religious hatreds, which in our days are conjoined with political ones, shall be removed, it will be admitted that we owe some gratitude to this imperial Rome, who, next to Greece, has been for the world the mother of all civilized life.

¹ Cameo on a fine agate of two layers. The griffins, sacred to Apollo, perhaps represent poetry. This cameo would in that case symbolize love and poetry, the one being the soul of the other, which it inspires and guides.



CUPID DRIVING TWO GRIFFINS.¹

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

IDEAS.

I.—THE LITERATURE OF THIS PERIOD IS NOT THE REPRESENTATION OF ITS GENERAL LIFE.

THE preceding chapters have shown what ideas the Roman people held in respect to the constitution of the family, of the city, and of the government, and consequently in respect to the rights and duties of the father, the magistrate, and the monarch. These were for the most part old ideas, with which were combined increasingly from day to day, by the mere effect of time and of the development of civilized life, conceptions novel to this severe world of antiquity. The spirit of equity enlarged the narrow formulas of Quiritarian law; the family was organized on a basis of greater liberty; the slave became a person; charity found a place in the administration of the Empire and the cities, good feelings in the habitual intercourse of the citizens; and for the idea of the privileges of common descent was substituted that of human brotherhood. It was the beginning of the greatest revolution the world had as yet seen.

What will its literature now say to us? What was its share in this movement of renovation?

It has been asserted that writers are the faithful representatives of the intellectual state of a people. They reveal indeed those superficial currents which pass through society and sometimes carry it with them, but often exist only upon its surface; they do not always indicate the deep currents by which decisive movements are determined in the heart of the entire mass of the nation. This is especially true in respect to the literature which succeeds that of the Augustan age.

After having had, from Plautus to Lucretius, the roughness, the strength, sometimes the splendor and boldness, of youth; after

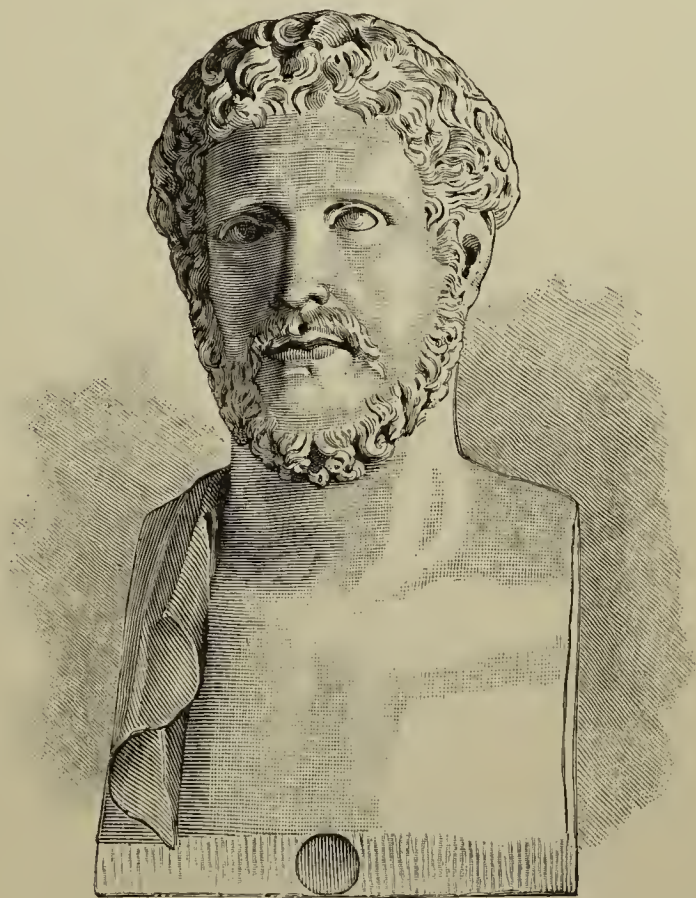
having expanded, from Cicero to Ovid, into a serene beauty, — Roman literature was now beginning to grow old. It had lost the charming creative gift which belongs only to privileged periods, and instead of being the expression of the national life, it consisted only of intellectual trifles whereby needy poets sought to furnish amusement to wearied senators. It became a trade which men adopted for a livelihood. Politics, which is the science of realities, being interdicted, men were thrown into the world of unrealities. In everything there was exaggeration: art, which could not be harmonious, became colossal, and grew heavy under its clumsy ornamentation. The poets became bombastic, overloaded their style with words stronger than the idea, and mistaking tinsel for gold, sought after wit, which is only valuable when it comes spontaneously to add grace to strength. While the present had so full a life, this literature took delight in mythological fables; when society was seeking to be purified from the pollution of Nero's time, it took pleasure in stirring up that filth. Accordingly, it is justly punished; at the time when all is prospering it declines.

It is not that men are not versed in all kinds of writing, all methods of style, all rhetorical figures, or that they do not employ them according to the rules of the schools. Like a dramatist who is much more occupied with using the theatrical machinery to advantage than in moving our minds by pity or terror, the writers of those times took the subordinate for the principal. That which should be the beginning of literary life became its aim and end, — a sterile labor, occupying minds destitute of wings with which to soar. We shall therefore pass these writers rapidly in review.

Look at the great poets of the time, — Silius Italicus and Statius. They have, it is true, imagination for details, but they have neither in their souls the creative power, nor in their hearts those intense emotions which give immortality to the poet's work; they are archæologists writing in verse. Silius, a prudent, cautious senator, who was consul under Nero and perhaps also under Domitian, while continuing something very like a man of integrity, escaped the dangers of those reigns and also the cares of old age, by quietly writing a few lines every day, which finally

made a poem of ten thousand verses, interesting to the historian, but rarely read by the man of poetic taste.

Statius, on the contrary, is an improvisator. He takes care to tell posterity that he composes rapidly, as Pliny liked it to be known that he could plead for hours: "Not one of my *Silvae* cost me more than two days, and some of them much less time than that." He sang the exploits of the Seven Champions before Thebes,—which subject must have been very tiresome to the Romans of his day. Valerius Flaccus goes back still farther, even to the Argonauts,—mythological poems and lifeless, giving a moment's pleasure to idle scholars, but incomprehensible to the people. Martial, who certainly has received too much honor, is not so learned, and belongs more to his time: "My muse," he says, "does not assume the extravagant cloak of the tragic poets.—'But everything written in such a style is



AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS (?).¹

praised, admired, and adored by all.'—I admit it. Things in that style are praised, but mine are read."² And unfortunately he had the right to boast of this. Then were read everywhere, even, if we may take his word for it, in virtuous homes, his fifteen hundred epigrams,—small pieces, the longest of which does not exceed

¹ Bust in the Capitol, Philosophers' Room, No. 35.

² *Epigr.* iv. 49. On the poets of this period, the *Poètes de la décadence romaine*, by M. Nisard, will be read with pleasure and profit.

fifty lines. In them are found wit and sometimes simplicity, conciseness, which is the principal merit at which he aims, and the skill to shoot his arrow at the close. But this writer of such short breath certainly does not enhance the value of his third-rate talent by degrading it to all base uses. A mendicant poet, he flatters "the god Domitian" to get a little money out of him, and he leads his scantily dressed muse through the slums of Rome from motives of self-interest quite as much as from taste; he seeks to sell his books, and aims at pleasing the licentious. "My verses are free," he says, "but my life is irreproachable."¹ You are mistaken, Martial; your life is not virtuous, since you trade upon vice.²

Persius declaims with conciseness and obscurity on moral questions; Juvenal, energetically on the vices of Rome; Lucan, with brilliancy on the civil wars. The first had a noble nature, and his work, a sort of catechism of the Stoic doctrine, is full of that philosophy which raised some minds so high and which we shall come upon again and again. He was a man of pure heart and clear intellect; many of his thoughts are grand, and his lines are often beautiful.³ His life was spotless, and he died at the age of twenty-eight; let us honor him:—

"Manibus date lilia plenis."

We find in Lucan dazzling beauties by the side of what is superficial and forced. His verses, written for a few young men who amid the orgies of despotism glowed with emotion before the image of an ideal republic, did not respond to the public sentiment. From the time of the Antonines they were out of fashion.⁴ Lucan looks towards the past; we should therefore question him in vain about the present, still less about the approaching future, did we not find in his verses, saturated with the then prevalent teaching of the Porch, some echoes of his own

¹ It was an echo of Ovid's words, just about as credible: "My muse has been frivolous, but my life has been pure" (*Tristia*, ii. 354).

² He often speaks of his bookseller, gives the latter's address and prices, and seeks to send him customers.

³ The six short satires of Persius contain only 650 verses. According to him and the Stoics, his masters, evil comes from ignorance. Philosophy alone teaches to do the right, and every man can attain this knowledge, *i. e.* wisdom.

⁴ Suetonius (*Life of Lucan*) notes as a forgotten practice that in his childhood Lucan was read in the schools: . . . *Poemata ejus prælegi memini.*

times, — the idea of the universal city, that of the human race laying down their arms to replace war by a brotherly friendship, even that (which the philosophers do not express) of the fruitful works of peace transforming the face of the world. After describing the great efforts made by Caesar to surround Pompey, he exclaims: “Hands thus many would have been able to unite Sestos and Abydos, and by heaping earth into it to exclude the sea of Phryxus, or to sever Ephyre from the wide realms of Pelops, and to cut short for vessels the circumnavigation of the long Malea, or to change any spot in the world.”

When the republican army reaches the oasis of Ammon, Labienus asks Cato to consult the oracle. What need is there, replies the latter, to question it? “All things of true importance we know, and Ammon will not engraft them more deeply. The Divinity stands in need of no voice. At our birth he has told us whatever we may be allowed to know; nor has he chosen barren sand that he may prophesy to a few, and in this dust concealed the truth.”¹

This is the God of Epictetus; and at that very time Saint Paul, almost in the same terms, was making known to the Areopagus at Athens the Unknown God.²

Juvenal is considered an authority as to the morals of that period; yet what is the value of his evidence? We are bound to note it, and his life and mode of writing will explain it. The son or pupil of a freedman, he does not seem to have had an easy life. At least he could succeed neither at the bar, since he continued poor, while so many others had grown rich, nor in the army, since he was unable to rise above the rank of sergeant of a cohort, and he declaimed for a long time without further increasing his fortune. Late in life he applied himself to poetry, at an age when the imagination has already cooled, but when there remains enough heat in the blood for anger. By his birth, talent, and poverty,³ he was like Martial, — a man out of his true

¹ ix. 573. At verse 580 he says: *Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quocumque moveris* (“Whatever thou dost behold and whatever thou dost touch, that is Jupiter”).

² *Acts*, xvii. 28: . . . ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμεν· ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν. This last clause is a hemistich which is found in Aratus (*Phœnom.* 5) and in Cleanthes (*Hymn to Jupiter*, 5).

³ He says himself: *Res exiguae . . . humilis domus* (*Sat.* xi. 129 and 169), and he paints

place in life; but the merry-hearted poet of Bilbilis was a lover of laughter, even in narrow circumstances. Juvenal, on the contrary, one whom natural disposition or circumstances rendered morose, saw and painted everything in black. He does not distinguish shades, and is as angry at a caprice as at a crime. Society, in which he found only a modest place, naturally seemed to him ill-constituted, and he became its implacable judge, — unless, indeed, his great indignation was fictitious and we ought to see in his work, in place of historical pictures, old scholastic theses eloquently put into verse. He himself informs us that before writing he impartially examined all the forms in vogue, and that, from satiety of elegies and Theseids, with which his ears were wearied, he decided upon satire because it had been abandoned. But, prudently, he avoids his own times. The men whom he designs to flay with his biting hyperbole are only “those whose ashes are covered by the Latin and Flaminian Ways,” — the companions of Nero, the profligate and art-loving young Emperor, who gave the rein to all vices, and made Rome share in all the follies with which he was himself possessed. Juvenal has written sixteen brilliant and musical satires against women, nobles, hypocrites, etc., — exact portraits perhaps of certain individuals, but assuredly false as a representation of society as a whole. Let us no longer take Juvenal as the true painter of Roman manners, especially those of his own time, — the grand period of the Antonines.

The prose-writers are nearer to real life; but probably they did not exercise upon it any more serious influence, — Seneca alone excepted, of whom we shall speak later.

Petronius, who is half poet, and Apuleius, who might have been one, have written two romances of low life, in which the hideous side of Roman manners is laid bare, but with no more pretension to general truthfulness than is usual in works of this kind. Apuleius, a lofty mind, which has its place in the philo-

poverty as a man who has suffered it (iii. 147). Yet an inscription of Or.-Henzen (No. 5,599) makes him *dumvir*, quinquennial, and flamen at Aquinum. Respecting his life, cf. Tenffel's *Gesch. der röm. Literatur*, p. 728. It is not certain that he was a pleader . . . *Declamavit, animi magis causa quam quod scolæ se aut foro præpararet* (*Vita Juv.*). The cause of his being exiled to Britain rather than Egypt seems to have been the public recitation by an actor of one of his pieces (Sid. Apoll. xi. 267). In other respects only conjectures can be made regarding both his life and his death.

sophical movement of the time, would seem to have made a bet to live a few days in bad company. Happily he comes forth in a manner which is for himself and his reader an escape. Petronius seems also to have abandoned the fashionable world for a while to make the round of houses of ill-fame, — a high-bred man mixing with low company in search of excitement.

These are books which we should not leave upon our tables; good Roman society nevertheless kept them on theirs. Hence we should be disposed to conclude that the latter sought very coarse diversions, did we not know that the best society of Europe in the seventeenth century, like a virtuous woman who can understand many things without being harmed thereby, took pleasure in the perusal of Petronius, just as it was not shocked by the coarse expressions of Molière. We have refined modesty, but possibly we are none the better for it.

The elder Pliny has the curiosity of a scientific man, it was the cause of his death; but he has not the scientific spirit. He is but a collector, heaping together all that he finds, bad as well as good, and disposing facts in his pigeon-holes according to an external resemblance, without selection, without criticism, and without ever uniting them by a philosophic bond. The science of Aristotle, Theophrastus, Hippocrates, and Hipparchus becomes in his hands an often rude empiricism. Of nature and of life he sees but the surface: all in it is to him phenomenal and accidental; nothing is harmonious or under general law. The declamations that he here and there interposes in his immense catalogue were once considered very eloquent, but when seen closely, have very little philosophic character. Yet we owe some gratitude to this friend of Vespasian who, intrusted with public duties, was, like him, irreproachable in the use of power, and who, also like the Emperor, an indefatigable worker, encroached upon his nights in reading, and preserving for us what he had learned. His collection is yet another proof to us of what we should call, in the strange style of the present day, the “realistic” tendency of the Roman mind. This book, made up of the fragments of two thousand volumes that we have lost, is itself one of the most precious fragments left by classic antiquity, and an abundant mine which should be faithfully explored by those who are interested to know

the manners, industries, arts, and daily life of the first century of the Christian era.

His nephew, the younger Pliny, by his Panegyric of Trajan and many of his lost writings, thought himself a rival of Demosthenes and Cicero: it is Fontanes succeeding Mirabeau. Cicero in his letters takes us to Rome and the Senate, to the villas of the great and the provincial governments; he tells us of the intrigues which are forming, the ambitious designs which are in agitation, the events which are making ready, and those which are brought to an issue. The men of whom he speaks are living figures which he draws in ineffaceable lines. In his correspondence the literary man admires the keen intelligence and the clear style, the historian sees society reflected as in a mirror, and the philosopher, in the presence of a man who exhibits his whole inner life, still finds an interesting study. The letters of Pliny, written for the public eye, not under the pressure of events and passion, but for the sole pleasure of writing, lack simplicity and interest. The author poses for the portrait which he wishes to be taken of him. Accordingly, he forgets nothing which can elevate and ennoble his likeness,—a bequest in favor of a city, an act of liberality to a friend, an allowance to some merchants; or what he considers courageous actions: a visit, for example, in the suburbs of Rome to a philosopher driven from the city, and certain words spoken in the Senate; or what he regards as stoical and praiseworthy indifference,—his calmness in the presence of Vesuvius burying the Campanian towns. It is a fault common, no doubt, to all authors of correspondence; but this self-consciousness is not counterbalanced in his letters by an animated picture either of the brilliant court or of a society in labor with a new world. Pliny is very far below the great letter-writers. Without the official correspondence which forms the tenth book, and where he is obliged to write as the governor of a province, his letters would teach us very little. However, they give us glimpses of an honorable and worthy society, of which he himself and Tacitus, his friend, made part,—a society which certainly helped to keep the Empire alive, by saving it from the vagabonds of Petronius and the debauchees of Martial and Juvenal.

Tacitus is quite a different figure: a man of honor like Pliny,

but moreover a great writer, who in certain respects may claim the first place among Latin prose authors. His thought is vigorous, like his style, although its depth is more apparent than real; because, while an incomparable painter and wonderful artist in fine language, he was neither a philosopher nor a statesman. Who can tell us his creed? Though superstitious, he is not sure whether there be beyond the grave a life of rewards and penalties, and he admits fatalism; that is to say, the contradiction of that liberty which he so much loves. The utmost that he can do is to leave to human wisdom the power of choosing in the way marked out by destiny the narrow path in which neither baseness nor peril is found, guiding those who follow it between the resistance which is fatal and the servility which is a disgrace. His religion, if he has any, is gloomy, like his soul. He does not believe in the good-will of the gods, but he does in their anger. After having depicted, at the beginning of his *Histories*, the calamities which the Empire had already suffered, he exclaims: "Never was it established by more terrible calamities on the Roman people, or by more decisive indications, that the gods are not concerned about the protection of the innocent, but the punishment of the guilty."

In politics his ideal is that which Trajan realized. He desires nothing more than a good ruler governing in harmony with the Senate; and the tragic events that he has so admirably related have not taught him that a great empire requires some pledges of security which are entirely independent of men. He does not foresee that the Antonines, preceded by Domitian, will be followed by Commodus; since the Empire, having neither the steadfastness to be found in institutions, nor that which convictions impose, lives from day to day, with nothing to secure the perpetuity of good or to arrest the invasion of evil.

The works of Tacitus belong to those which will always be read. The man in our times who desires to restore to his own language the firmness which it loses by the extemporaneous effusions of the platform and of the press should study this brief, forcible style, rather than the Ciceronian period, unrolling itself in large and sumptuous folds which so easily become loose and feeble in an inexpert hand.

By his character and life Tacitus adorns Latin literature and

that of all time. But when we have drawn attention to his indignation, which often leads him astray, and his pleas for liberty, which he always couches in eloquent vagueness, we have said all respecting his influence on his contemporaries. Yet his works certainly contributed to modify the imperial power and draw the Senate nearer to the Emperor. This service entitles him to the grateful mention of history.

Suetonius must have made an excellent imperial secretary from a literary point of view. But this writer, whose phrases are happy and expressions well-chosen, seems never to have thought. He is a man of small mind and a poor historian. He collects, without verifying them, the facts furnished by archives and contemporary monuments, and disposes them according to an apparent order, which is only chance and confusion. His collection is a valuable mine of materials whence one must draw with discretion, but not a living work. He is wanting in the great art of composition, and quite as much in the philosophy which interprets facts and discovers the truth hidden under contrary appearances. He has the robust faith of the old times in ridiculous miracles, and he is afraid of dreams. We have nothing to ask of him nor of Quintus Curtius, Alexander's too credulous historian, nor of Justin, the abbreviator of Trogus Pompeius; and we already know what must be thought of Fronto, in spite of the friendship of Marcus Aurelius. Columella, Pomponius Mela, and Frontinus have left some valuable remarks on agriculture, geography, tactics, and aqueducts; but their books belong to the class which furnish facts without giving ideas.¹

We may also pass without notice the *Institutions of Oratory*, a work correct and cold, but of very pure taste, in which Quintilian has brought together all the scholastic rules for forming an orator. He knows well enough that no master will ever give the inventiveness which discovers, the logic which enchains, the passion which warms, the tones which wake an echo in men's souls, and that, if art forms rhetoricians, nature, circumstances, and the study of the great models alone make the powerful orator.

¹ The same is the case with Julius Obsequens (*De Prodigis*), with Censorinus (*De Die natali*), with Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticæ*), whose book, he himself tells us, "was written without examination and order," etc.

The skilful rhetorician has at least the merit of recognizing that it is by the touch of genius, and not in the schools, that the flame of genius is kindled.

Accordingly, with the exception of Tacitus [and perhaps Juvenal] all these authors make up a second-rate literature, often affected and full of mannerisms, or taking exaggeration for force, subtilty for simplicity, and in which the creative faculty is wanting.

It is not because the public was little inclined for literature. There existed for it a very strong taste, and this society placed nothing above the pleasures of the mind. Books were loved and sought for, libraries were formed, which at least saved the treasures of ancient literature;¹ and as this taste reached the provinces, it was useful for the spread of books throughout the Empire. There were libraries at Lyons and Autun; we know that Martial's *Epigrams* were circulated in Gaul and Britain, and that Ovid's verses were read everywhere.² There even existed literary societies. Augustus had founded an academy in the imperial palace; Caligula, that of Lyons; and the Museum of Alexandria was always a scientific centre. The son of Agrippina had instituted Neronian games, which Domitian renewed by adding to them the contest of the Capitol (*agon Capitolinus*), in which every five years prizes in poetry, eloquence, and music were competed for.

But this society was too prosperous: the over-rich lands give fruits without flavor, while the perfumes of Arabia grow in arid sands; high art was on the decline. Yet if the rostra were dumb, there was found almost as often in imperial as in republican Rome an occasion for making brilliant speeches,—in the courts and the Senate, in schools of rhetoric, in meetings of all kinds, even in the army, where numerous medals represent Emperors haranguing their soldiers. Lastly, a new and powerful form of eloquence was soon to come into existence,—that of philosophers seeking to attract the multitude by discourses that were really sermons, and that of the clergy of the Christian Church, who by preaching were about to conquer the pagan world.

¹ Larcus Lucinus offered the elder Pliny 400,000 sesterces for his MS. of the *Historia naturalis* (the younger Pliny, *Epist.* iii. 5).

² Seneca, *Controv.* 7.

The press not being in existence, there was more talking than writing. This was a necessity in the condition of the times. Accordingly, education in the schools gave a very high rank to the oratorical art, and it was favored by the government itself. The most ancient chairs founded by the state were for rhetoric, or, as we should call them, professorships of oratory. Quintilian held the first, and the frugal Vespasian endowed it with a stipend of a hundred thousand sesterces. Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius, multiplied these endowments and granted the professors valuable immunities. All the cities of any importance followed this example; it might be said that at no other period has the art of speaking well been more cultivated. The Caesars, the Flavians, were themselves men of learning; the Antonines were lovers of art or philosophers, and no rulers ever did more for the development of intellectual life.

It is true that politics and history were silent, at least under the Caesars and the Flavians; for it was during Trajan's reign that Tacitus wrote his formidable works, and Suetonius, Hadrian's secretary, his biographies, so severe in their vapid impartiality. In the very presence of Nero, Lucan had sung the valor of Pompey, and Horace at the court of Augustus had celebrated the indomitable Cato. As a rule the Emperors allowed their subjects a liberty as regards philosophy and religion¹ which ancient France did not possess. In the latter country religious and political subjects could not be discussed, under pain of the Bastille; in history a prudent reserve was needful, and the boldest philosopher had to restrain and veil his doctrinal audacities. Yet the age of Louis XIV. is our great literary period. In spite of the contrary prejudice, we are therefore forced to admit that the nature of the government exercises very little influence on literature, and causes neither its brilliancy nor its decay. Genius is born where it lists, and there is no human power capable of making a writer when nature does not work to the same end. The most that can be said is that favorable or hostile circumstances either promote or hinder his development. Besides, in every civilized nation there exists

¹ I have explained in Vol. V. pp. 6, 210, 410, 446, etc., the particular motives for the persecution of the Christians, and have shown (pp. 28, 153) that in the case of Thrasea, Helvidius Priscus, etc., not philosophy, but political opposition, was proscribed.

a mass of floating intelligence which, like current coin, sometimes more, sometimes less abundant, serves the daily wants of social life; and also a certain quantity of intellectual power, which is applied to the higher needs of the mind. The latter is the reserved capital used in the large speculations. But the nature of these speculations varies with the time, and works can differ without lowering the intellectual level. After the formation of the Roman Empire the active minds threw themselves into the administration and the army, while the meditative minds studied the means of organizing this immense society according to most equitable laws, or of regulating private life by the best moral precepts.

The same division of the common task has taken place at all periods. Italy in the Renaissance sought and found glory in the plastic arts, France of the seventeenth century in the best forms of literature. Napoleon, who would have made Corneille a prince, created only marshals; and our time, which promises fortune and honor to literary talents, produces above all chemists, physicists, engineers, and manufacturers. At each of these four periods, by the side of the dominant forms of intellectual activity there are others which languish. So was it during the Empire: in place of adding new names to the poetic constellation of the Augustan age, it formed administrators and juriconsults, architects and philosophers, and excellent ones too. There was therefore at that time a change of manifestation, but not a diminution of intellectual force. Is it not a compensation, in the absence of great poets, to have had men who knew how to give peace and prosperity for two centuries to so many millions; who framed the justest laws, constituted the best civil life, and taught the purest morality? Time and the Barbarians have caused the disappearance of almost all the monuments of the Antonine period; but were the temple of Olympian Zeus still standing on the shore of the Ilissus, Palmyra in the midst of its desert, Baalbec on the slopes of Libanus, and Trajan's Forum, with all the wonders which it contained, at the foot of the Capitol, can we doubt that this period, so rich in magnificent works, in administration, in law, in art, and in moral philosophy, would take its place among the great periods of history?

Moreover, in estimating the intellectual value of this time it would be unjust not to take count of the authors who used the other great language of the Empire. Greek was understood at Rome; the best society spoke it, and every educated man could read the works written in it, of which the authors were not always men of Greek origin, — as, for example, Marcus Aurelius, Aelian, and the sophist of Arles, Favorinus, in the Antonine period; the African Cornutus as early as Nero's time; and perhaps Germanicus in the age of Augustus. Gauls, Spaniards, and Africans are admitted into Rome's literary Pantheon: why should it be closed against writers of the Oriental provinces, against men of consular rank like Arrian and Dion Cassius? We know well enough that there are no longer any "sons of Romulus," that the Latin blood has been lost in the immense body of the Empire, and that the vigor of the life of this new organism depends on the vitality of the parts which compose it. Who are more truly Roman — that is to say, Roman in the imperial period — than the great jurisconsults, Gaius, who is believed to be a Greek, or Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, all three of Syrian birth and speaking Cicero's language so well? The influence of Greek works equalled that of Latin. Plutarch taught for a long time on the banks of the Tiber, Epictetus lived there, and Lucian, the Voltaire of the period, declaimed there. The writings of the severe satirist did not certainly lack readers in any province of the Empire, and those of the moralist of Chaeronea have deservedly continued to our own times valued works on education. How many generations of children, how many great minds, have made these works their favorite reading! Henri Quatre kept Plutarch always at hand, and Montaigne used to say of the book, "It is our breviary." Like Polybius, Appian is more an historian in the modern sense of the word than Livy or Tacitus. Without Pausanias we should know Greece very imperfectly; without Dion Chrysostom, we should be ignorant of the ethical teaching of the time; without Aelius Aristides, the mystic reveries in which men had already begun to take delight would be lost to us.¹

Arrian, a man of action and of thought, a friend of the

¹ His *Ἱεροὶ λόγοι*, or *Sacred Discourses*, contain his conversations with Aesculapius, the recital of his visions, etc.

Antonines, and deservedly so, with one hand kept in check the Barbarians of the Euxine and of the Caucasus, and with the other edited the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus. This work, the object of Pascal's admiration and to Saint Borromeo a source of edification, gave rise to another, the *Εἰς ἑαυτόν*, which has given Marcus Aurelius his saintly renown. This is a long enough list of illustrious names to justify us in styling this new growth of Greek literature in the time of the Antonines a renaissance.¹

When has the world ever produced greater things in morals? The Church already boasted of her Latin or Greek apologists,—Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Minucius Felix;² and while the philosophers were striving by a powerful effort to rejuvenate paganism and raise its morality, her doctors were founding the science of Christian metaphysics.

This period also loved natural science more even than it was loved in the time of Augustus, but without, however, carrying it very far. Horace would have liked to know "what force controls the sea, rules the year, and directs the course of the stars;" but it was only a poet's curiosity. Pliny, Seneca, have the scientist's curiosity; they are not satisfied with looking, they investigate. Seneca, who knows that one can go from Spain to the Indies by rounding Africa, has prophetic views respecting the existence of extensive lands in the West. "The ocean," he says, "will one day reveal its secrets, and Thetis will show new worlds." In his *Natural Questions* he asks if we must consider the heavens a gloomy desert; if, excepting the five planets, whose motions we know, the rest of the stars remain forever stationary in their places.³ He foretells the periodic comets which our age alone has been able to understand, and he had the presentiment that many other truths remained to be discovered. "If we consecrated all our efforts to science, if a temperate youth made this their only study, if fathers made it the text of their lessons, and sons the object of their labors, we should scarcely reach the bottom of that abyss where truth lies hidden which at present our indolent

¹ Other Greek writers of this time are Athenaus, Philostratus, Babrius, Maximus of Tyre, the physicians Aretaus, Rufus of Ephesus, and Sextus Empiricus, the wisest of the ancient sceptics, the mathematician Theon of Smyrna, etc.

² Minucius Felix perhaps belongs to the first half of the third century.

³ *Quæst. nat. in præf.*, and vii. 27.

hands seek only on the surface of the ground.”¹ At those moments when he believes in another life, he promises the good that all the secrets of Nature shall there be unveiled to them.²

Two men, Galen and Ptolemy, whose teaching lived through thirteen centuries, down to the Renaissance, are the brilliant



OCEAN PERSONIFIED.⁴

representatives of the scientific spirit of that time. Galen, next to Hippocrates, was the greatest physician of ancient times, by the certainty of his diagnosis, by the importance he attached to anatomy, and, what was a new thing, to experience.³ He dissected apes, and wished to have practical demonstrations verify the teaching given: these were the beginnings, still very uncertain and too quickly arrested, of our experimental method. Some learned men believe that he was very near discovering the circulation of the blood, and that his knowledge of physiology makes him the precursor, almost without intermediaries, of the physiologists of our age.

Let us add, to the honor of this great mind, that the historians of philosophy give him a conspicuous place among the philosophers of that time. As an astronomer Ptolemy is not equal to Hipparchus;⁵ but if he had

¹ vii. 32, *ad finem*.

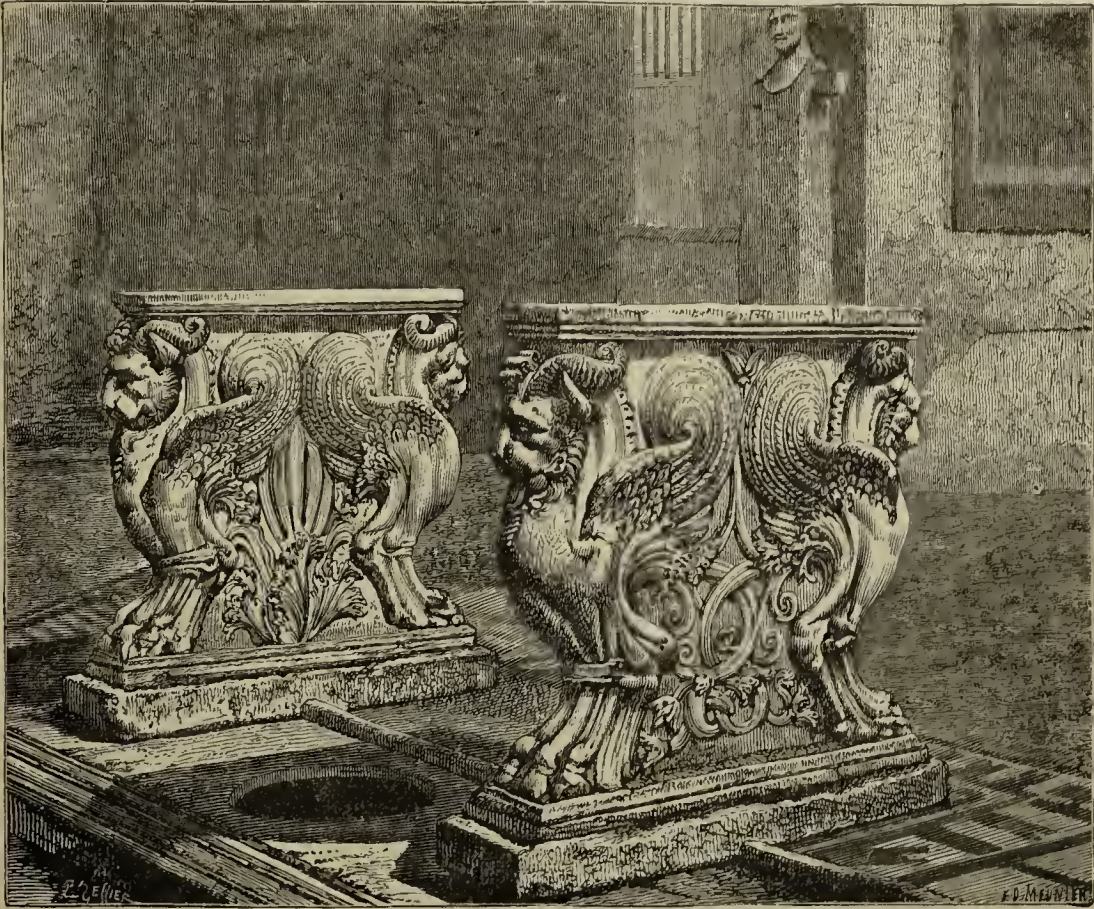
² *Epist.* 102 : . . . *Aliquando naturae tibi arcana reteguntur.*

³ He used to say that it is necessary κρίνειν τῇ πείρᾳ τὰ ἐκ λόγου διδασθέντα (*De Medico et philosopho*, edit. Kühn, i. 58). In respect to the dissection of apes, see *De Anat. admin.* iii. 5, vol. ii. p. 385, Kühn. Daremberg says that the influence of Galen endured till the seventeenth century, even to the middle of the eighteenth (*Galien considéré comme philosophe*, p. 1, and *Exposition des connaissances de Galien sur l'anatomie, la physiologie et la pathologie du système nerveux*).

⁴ Bust in the Vatican.

⁵ For the first two centuries of the Empire, M. Henri Martin cites in his history of

not written his *Syntaxis*, it is probable, Delambre asserts, that we should have had neither Kepler nor, consequently, Newton. "I know that I am mortal," a Greek epigram represents him as saying, "and that my career cannot be long; but when in spirit I follow the pathway of the stars, my feet no longer touch the earth, I



MARBLE FEET OR SUPPORTS OF A TABLE FOUND IN THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS RUFUS AT POMPEII.¹

am seated at the side of Jupiter, and, like the gods, I feed upon celestial ambrosia." Here was the enthusiasm of science.

The *Poliorceticus* of Apollodorus, the architect of the great bridge over the Danube and of Trajan's Forum, and the immense works which were executed throughout the whole Empire, prove that the Romans, without having added anything to the geometry of Archimedes and Euclid, had at least, as intelligent disciples,

Astronomie ancienne some observations from which Ptolemy profited, and a certain number of elementary treatises, but no discovery (*Dict. des Antiq.* p. 502).

¹ Museum of Naples.

perfected the construction of machines.¹ Yet the true scientific spirit was lacking in this society, and for fifteen centuries more

will still be lacking to the human mind. Thus is explained the empire which mysticism acquired over men's minds, — the efforts made, that is to say, to penetrate by imagination and feeling the mysteries of Nature while Science was not yet able to question her closely and compel her to make reply.

By the side of these illustrious men a place must be reserved for the praetors who brought the ancient laws into harmony with the new ideas of justice; for the jurisconsults whose mutilated fragments inspire so profound a respect; for those unknown artists who decorated Rome and the provinces with so much architectural magnificence, the temples and public places with a whole population of statues, the palaces with charming frescos, the private houses with numberless objects of art, furniture,



and vases, whose exquisite elegance is revealed by the fragments found at Herculaneum and Pompeii:³ and all this compels us to

¹ The minute operations of the *gromatici*, or surveyors, were also useful applications of geometry.

² Lamp-bearer in green bronze, found at Pompeii. Museum of Naples.

³ On this question of art at Rome and in the Empire, see Friedländer, iii. 128–270. Very beautiful statues were carved, those of Antinous, for example; but painting was always neglected. Moreover, this is not the place to speak of it. One observation, however, belongs to the subject of this chapter; namely, that even under the Empire the Romans, while showing much love for the arts, yet held artists in small esteem, since the majority of them were of low social position. The architects form an exception. Many Romans practised this art, the

admit that without attaining the serene beauty of the three or four great periods when humanity found the highest expression of its intellectual power, this period was not one of decadence.

It has some remarkable agreements with our own, — great commerce, much industry, immense public works, an extremely abundant supply of artistic work in verse and prose, in statuary and carving, in temples and villas, but none of those artists whose name History inscribes in her golden book. In addition, gentle manners, a spirit of benevolence, and an official religion, — an object of external respect, as being a means of government; but also dogma shaken by the scepticism of philosophers, the indifference of the learned, and the scoffs of the poets, profoundly modified by foreign importations, and yet sustained by the interested adhesion of statesmen and the touching faith of the lower classes; and lastly, refined natures seeking their way between the proud nihilism of the Stoics and the impure follies of certain creeds, turning aside even into the mysticism which opens to them a road lighted by confused gleams, wherein they believe that they see prodigies and hear words of salvation.

How far are we, with all these things, from the Rome of early times, and how near to a revolution, since society is leaving the paths trodden by twenty generations! Formerly, devotion to the city made the whole of morality, respect for its gods the whole of religion. Now, dignity is no longer centred in consulships and in triumphs, but in virtue; the pride of the philosopher has replaced that of the patrician, and Juvenal¹ demands of the senator, in place of civic merits, a something which the poet calls by a

only one in which they showed originality; and in the second century many sumptuous buildings were erected. I have spoken of Roman architecture at the beginning of the Empire, and I am warranted in not returning to this question by the following words of M. Choisy, in his book on the *Art de bâtir chez les Romains* (p. 178): "From the reign of Augustus the methods of Roman architecture were fixed, and the building art remained, so to speak, stationary at its highest point of perfection for a period of more than three centuries. . . . But by degrees the decoration and the structure became almost independent of one another. Accordingly, they obey, in development and in decadence, different, or even opposite laws. The methods of construction were the same under the Antonines as under the first Caesars, while architecture was visibly modified during the intervening century. At the end of the third century architecture had fallen very low, while the art of building, still flourishing, produced the *Thermae* which bear the name of Diocletian." This distinction between decorative art, which declines, and the art of building, which lasts, was made for the first time by Raphaël. See E. Müntz, *Gazette des beaux-arts*, October, 1880.

¹ viii. 73. The whole of this satire implies contempt for the privileges of birth or race.

name unknown to the Republic, — the *sensus communis*. In presence of so many interests which must be conciliated, of so many nations which must be united, larger views of society had been taken, the mental horizon had extended. And as from amid a multitude of gods the idea of the divine unity was evolved, so from the



MARBLE VASE FROM POMPEII.

heart of this Empire, now become the universal city, was evolved the idea of human brotherhood. One of Trajan's inscriptions says, *Conservatori generis humani*.¹ The philosophers call themselves citizens of the world,² and would willingly remove the barriers between states. "How absurd," exclaims Seneca, "are these boundaries

¹ Orelli, No. 795.

² *Mundanus*, or κοσμοπολίτης. See a memoir by M. Le Blant on the loosening of the bonds of patriotism (*Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des inscr.*, 1872, p. 373).

marked out by men!"¹ To the ancient law which said: *Hospes hostis* (the stranger is an enemy), the new law replies, The stranger is a brother.²

All this is shown very imperfectly by the literary writers of the time. To know which way society was tending, we must consult other men, study other facts, and set forth, even if in few words, the philosophic and religious movement which was drawing these men into regions hitherto unknown.

II. — EDUCATION, THE JURISCONSULTS, AND THE PHILOSOPHERS.

WHEN men have written the history of Christianity they have considered nothing else involved, and have paid no attention to the great work of renovation which was going on in the bosom of pagan society. Since it is the ideas and morals of a hundred million of men which we are studying in their diverse forms, let us inquire what the contemporaries of Nero and Hadrian believed best for the regulation of life, and how they taught it.

The education of the young was still conducted on the old lines. There were neither state nor clerical schools. Teaching continued absolutely free. The studies were divided, as in our days, into what we call "elementary" and "classical" studies. The former dealt with the poets, the latter with the orators; later came the jurisconsults and philosophers.

At this time there was a great enthusiasm for poetry, or at least verses. Everybody, even Trimalchio, made verses or read them; they were carved even on the tombs. What was a fashion among the public became an obligation in the schools. Men wished their children to be fitted to shine at some future day in recitations or the competitions of the Capitol, to gain wreaths, applause, fame, though but for the moment. If the poet very rarely acquired wealth, there was always a Maecenas easily to be pleased, and one always got something for a flattering stanza, for an epigram subservient to the

¹ *O quam ridiculi sunt mortalium termini!* (*Quaest. nat. in praeef.*)

² This idea, very new in Rome, was very ancient, since it is found in the *Odyssey*: . . . Ἀντὶ κασιγνήτου ξείνός θ' ἰκέτης (viii. 546), it is even older than Homer, for it comes from human nature, which in the savage may be compassionate. The natives of New Caledonia make flower-beds along their paths for the traveller (*Explorateur* of the 27th April, 1876).

anger or the vanity of a patron. But poetry is a picture; it is color, form, rhythm; the faculties it calls into play are feeling and imagination, — faculties at once seductive and dangerous, when not restrained and directed by others more severe. In the service of a lofty intellect they make the great poet. For the average mind, this prolonged study of the poets, these repeated exercises in imitation enervate the understanding, attach it to outward show, and make it accept, instead of ideas, the color which dazzles, the musical harmony which surprises, and the form which covers mere emptiness.

In the study of rhetoric, ridiculous subjects were proposed, in order to sharpen the intellect, — such as the eulogiums upon the flea and the parrot with which Dion Chrysostom¹ began, and odd theses taken from unreality or treated in contempt of historic truth. The pupil, transported into the regions of fancy, found himself surrounded by imaginary manners and personages who were mere phantoms. The subjects discussed were impossible catastrophes, scourges let loose by the anger of the gods, the immolation of a victim demanded by the oracle; and the most tragic adventures kept recurring: as a famished city feeding on corpses, a tyrant compelling a son to behead his father, noble maidens delivered up to infamous procurers, bandits in ambush at the edge of every wood, pirates on every shore, fiercely shaking the chains with which they are about to shackle lovers surprised during their nuptial festivities. It is said that Nero, while Rome was in flames, seized his lyre and sang the fall of Troy. The thing is doubtful; but many men would have been capable of such madness.

These exercises, assiduously practised at school, and continued long after in the public declamations, very much perverted the mind; there remained in the life something exaggerated, theatrical, which often passed from words into deeds. The traces of this are found even in the finest characters.

Happily not all the masters were so foolish. If we read the younger Pliny's letter to Corellia.² or the first book of the *Meditations*

¹ Bréquigni, *Vie de Dion*, p. 50. See, in the *Dialogus de Oratoribus* of Tacitus, what Messala says "of idle declamations, without any connection with reality," which employed the youth; and at the beginning of the *Satyricon* these words of Petronius: "Our young people become so stupid on the benches because they neither see nor hear anything of ordinary life."

² *Epist.* iii. 3.

of Marcus Aurelius, we shall see what in the houses of the great was the education of children. We even know, by the fragments of Dositheus, that there were employed in the schools works similar to our treatises on ethics. Human nature is the same at all times. We can therefore be sure that fathers, while yielding to the taste of the time, were not satisfied with these frivolities for their children, and that the instructor, in his explanation of the poets and orators, would call attention to those beautiful sentences, those noble thoughts which always give pleasure, and without which orators and poets would not have survived. Does not even Juvenal, coarse and licentious though he is, demand respect for childhood? Besides, on leaving school the young man found other means of education, — daily life, which placed him again in the strong current of reality; jurisprudence and philosophy, which taught him his duties as a citizen and a man.

What the great jurisconsults, who followed uninterruptedly from Hadrian to Alexander Severus, did for the Roman world we have shown already in the course of this History, and particularly in the two chapters on the Family and the City. Their great work consisted especially in substituting a rule of equity for an ancient rule of civil law, allowing the latter to drop into desuetude without any action on the part of the legislator. Therefore their work can be summed up in a few words: —

They broadened, while making it milder, the hard, narrow code of a small agricultural and warlike people, so as to make of the civilized world one community, ruled by just laws dictated by general reason, and no longer by the interest of a class or a city.

They took in hand the cause of the weak. To destroy the inveterate practices of abortion and exposure, they declared that it was “murder to stifle or cast out the newly born infant, to refuse one’s child nourishment, and to reckon on the pity of others when oneself had none.”¹

They gave rights to those who had so long been regarded as incapable of receiving them, — the son, the wife, the mother, all those disinherited by nature, family, and law, the *spurius*, the freed, the slave, and even the insane, whom they sought to protect against himself.

¹ *Necare videtur* (Paulus under the head *De Agnoscendis et alendis liberis*. *Digest*, xxv. 3, 4).

To the child abandoned and picked up by a slave merchant they opened the door of liberty. To him whom adoption or citizenship had separated from his relatives they restored his natural family; and when Hadrian changed, in the case of the *pueri alimentarii*, the age of puberty, in order to render them help for a longer time, the juriconsults justified this change in the common law by "the pious feeling" which had inspired it (*pietatis intuitu*).¹

In administration they made of the city and the corporation, — that city within a city, — civil persons, so that they might receive donations, and they imposed on the governors of provinces the protection of the poor.

In judicature they did not indeed follow the philosophers, who said: "Society defends itself in punishing those who break its laws; it does not take vengeance. Extreme severity of punishments is a useless cruelty, and torture a horrible absurdity." But they introduced the great principle of penal law, which demands the identity of the offender with the one condemned;² they did not admit charges against the absent, "because it is much better to let a guilty man escape than condemn one innocent;"³ and Hadrian forbade resort to torture, unless there was good ground to believe that the truth could by no other means be arrived at.⁴ Ulpian even wrote: ". . . torture, a worthless and perilous thing, which often conceals the truth."⁵

In the finance they sought, eighteen centuries before the French Revolution, equality as regards public charges, and by the mouth of Antoninus they declared that the tax should be proportional to the income.⁶

¹ *Digest*, xxxiv. 14, sect. 1.

² Marcus Aurelius would not let the crime or fault of the father fall on the son (*Digest*, xlviii. 19, 26), though such was the law in France until the year 1789. Thus the natural child (*spurius*), even if born of incest, can become a decurion: *Non enim impedienda est dignitas ejus qui nihil admisit* (*ibid.* 1, 2, 6). Those condemned for a time to the mines, but of free condition before their condemnation, preserved their condition. A woman *paenae serva* gave birth to free children (Rescript of Hadrian, *ibid.* xlviii. 19, 28, sect. 6).

³ Expression from a rescript of Trajan (*ibid.* 19, 5).

⁴ *Digest*, xlviii. 18, 1, sect. 1.

⁵ *Etenim res est fragilis et periculosa et quae veritatem fallat* (*ibid.* sect. 23). Torture was abolished in France only towards the end of the eighteenth century: in 1780, the *question préparatoire*, or means of proof, used in the examination of capital charges when the tribunal of the bailli had sanctioned it (Ordonn. of 1780); in 1789, the *question préalable*, inflicted on one condemned to death to obtain the revelation of his accomplices.

⁶ In the *Code*, x. 41, 1.

In the matter of public order, by their counsels they aided the government in substituting, for organized pillage by the revenue-farmers and proconsuls of the Republic, the justice which the imperial legates introduced into their administration.

In fine, it is to them that the eternal honor falls of having created the science of law and taught it to the world.

Doubtless many reserves have to be made on the subject of those codes which have been called "written reason," and of those men who styled themselves "priests of the law." Thus their great monument, the Pandects, is often only a tissue of contradictions, where we perceive the effort made by the jurists to depart from the ancient law, while appearing to retain it. They admitted the common origin of men, yet they kept slavery; they considered that equality proceeds from natural right, and they left society its aristocratic character, with penalties of special severity in the case of the poor. But shall we reproach them for not compelling manners to be modified according to their theories? Law never makes a *tabula rasa* but at the expense of terrible convulsions; and the Romans, who were men both of tradition and progress, did not desire to drive the past out violently from the present. In this they were right.

Was this work of renovation accomplished by virtue of certain philosophic ideas? This has been asserted, and the honor of these reforms has been ascribed to the Stoic philosophy. Doubtless it contributed towards them. But the jurisconsults, by the very nature of their work, remained far behind the philosophers, and obeyed less the influence of philosophic teaching than that of the time. Philosophy, in fact, is more often an effect than a cause, and it becomes a cause in its turn, like all human facts, only after having been a consequence. The softening of manners, the progress of public opinion, the life in common during a profound peace, the need which each had of all, consequent on the development of industry and commerce, led the jurists to a new conception of the relations which men ought to have among themselves. These people of humble station whose fraternal feelings we have seen, were not the followers of any school of philosophy,—certainly not of Plato or Aristotle; for on the question of slavery, for example, these powerful minds would have taught them the legitimacy of servitude. As the light is formed of individual rays, so each period has in

politics or religion a general body of thought made up of a number of individual thoughts tending in the same direction. Philosophy, which has often thrown into the world the germ of these new ideas, extends its power by giving them precision, and supplies a formula to those which arise spontaneously from the teaching of life. Then the legislator takes them up, and so a peaceful revolution occurs.

The praetors and jurisconsults of imperial Rome were able to understand these wants and to satisfy them so far as public manners allowed.¹ We shall now see the philosophers, the necessary predecessors of the legists, acting on society by the bold conceptions of men who, having only themselves to consider, could therefore use greater freedom of speech.

The whole of individual morality is embodied in the following precept: to secure one's own self-respect by the firm government of one's passions, under the watchful eye of the inner judge, conscience. The whole of social morality is summed up in these words: to respect the goods, the honor, and the person of others, — negative virtue; but besides, to do unto others what we would that they should do unto us, — positive virtue.

Has philosophy taught this morality?

By preaching to men a law revealed, and consequently of divine authority; original sin, which renders a mediator and redemption necessary; salvation by grace, that is to say, the subordination of the reason to faith; lastly, the hope of a life to come, which makes this life a probation, in which the other is gained or lost, — Christianity has changed the poles of the moral world. The heathen believed above all in this life, and hoped to find a law in themselves, by enlightening their reason and making their conscience sensitive. The end of their efforts was therefore to reach what Satan once offered as a temptation to Adam, — the knowledge of good and evil.

These are two absolutely opposite systems, though they touch at numberless points.² The one has destroyed the other; but the latter

¹ The praetor's work at Rome was much like that performed in England by the Lord Chancellor and the Courts of Equity, — in slowly modifying the civil law.

² M. Ravaissou (*Mém. sur le stoïcisme*, in the *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.* xxi. p. 81) says: "The Christian is as humble as the Stoic is proud. He expects all from God, who changes the heart; the Stoic expects nothing but from himself." On the difference between the Stoicism of Seneca and Christianity, see Aubertin, *Sénèque et Saint Paul*, pp. 178-393. This book strikes a last blow at the legend touching the relations between the philosopher and the apostle, by showing that the supposed Christianity of Seneca was the legitimate

before it perished made noble efforts to save itself which have long been underrated, and to which we ought to do justice, for they are an honor to human nature and prepared the way for the victors' triumph. How wise was Bossuet in exhibiting the conquests of Rome as the indispensable preliminary to the conquests of Christ! — especially when to the victories of the legions, which had united so many peoples under one political law, we add those of the philosophers, who sought to find for all these multitudes one moral law. The religion of Nature, which, spreading from India to Greece, from Athens to Rome and Western Europe, had so long lulled the Aryan race with its poetic reveries, had lost its empire over the better class of minds, so that, long before the one God of the Semitic people had been made known to the Roman world, a great work had been done in developing out of man's religious consciousness the idea of the Divine unity, in transforming polytheism and replacing its legends, so full of dangerous seductions, by moral teaching.

We have judged with severity Seneca, Nero's minister; and we must again be severe in respect to Seneca the philosopher, because of his contradictions and uncertainties. Nevertheless, while he cannot say what men ought to believe respecting God, providence, the human soul, and the future life, — an uncertainty in which the theologian does not share, but which disturbs the mind of the philosopher, — the latter knows well enough what must be done in the present life.

And first as regards self-improvement.

Tertullian has said of Seneca: "He often belongs to us."¹ In his treatises, in his letters, we find contempt for riches, pain, and death. Life is a penalty to which we must submit; death, a deliverance. We suffer from a corroding ulcer, sin; before all, this must be healed. The beginning of salvation is to acknowledge one's sin, and the healing of the soul is the great work of philosophy.² A man reaches it by the development in himself of the spiritual life and by following the counsels of philosophy. There is but one remedy for the distempers and diseases of the mind, and that is philosophy.

result of the moral theories of Greece. See also Westerburg, *Der Ursprung der Sage dass Seneca Christ gewesen sei* (1881), who explains how this legend was formed.

¹ *De Anima*, 20.

² Plutarch says also: "Philosophy alone heals the infirmities and the maladies of the soul" (*De Educ.* chap. x.). And this is not an empty expression, but responds to a real action of the master on the disciples; the expression, besides, is Plato's.

These spiritual solicitudes are shown, in the conduct of life, by the hatred of evil and the love of the good, with some of the extreme refinements and severities of Christianity. The Stoics, even the Epicureans and Cynics, recommended, as does Saint Paul, celibacy;¹ they condemned the lusts of the flesh, honored continence and chastity, and threatened the adulterer with rigors as great as those of the Church.² They held bodily pleasures and pains in perfect contempt, and took delight in abstinences and macerations; it will be remembered that it was necessary to use constraint with Marcus Aurelius when ill to prevent his practising them. "Happiness," said Demonax,³ "belongs only to the free man, and he alone is free who neither fears nor hopes anything."

The Cynics possessed no property of their own, and used to beg in the streets. Others more austere awaited alms, like that Demetrius who had refused from Caligula two hundred thousand sesterces and braved Nero's anger. Seneca, who often sought his conversation, used to say of him: "I do not doubt that Nature raised him up to serve in our age as an example and living reproach.⁴ When I see him naked and lying almost on the straw, it seems to me that truth possesses in him no mere interpreter, but a *witness*." He was a martyr of philosophy.⁵ In the following century Demonax led the same kind of life at Athens, and Lucian, so hard upon the Cynics, pronounced a high eulogium on him. "He lived a sober and irreproachable life, setting an example of prudence and wisdom to all who saw and heard him. His constant employment was to reconcile contending brethren and make peace between man and wife. When the people mutinied and rebelled, he interposed sea-

¹ Epictetus expressly recommends it to the philosopher (*Medit.* iii. 22). In the work of Secundus, in which is reproduced a pretended conversation of this philosopher with the Emperor Hadrian, the dominant thought is the renunciation of goods and pleasures, hatred of woman, contempt of life, the praise of death. Cf. the Memoir of M. Révillout (*Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des inscr.*, 1872, pp. 290 et seq.). At Rome the *flamen dialis* could not marry again (Tertull., *De Uxor.* i. 7). There existed a sect of pagan monks, the Massilians (*Comptes rendus, ibid.* p. 264), who remind us of the Essenes and the Jewish therapeuts.

² Seneca, *Epist.* 44, 12, *Ad Marc.* 2 and 24, *Ad Helv.* 13; Saint Jerome, *Adv. Jovin.* i. 30. One of Plato's laws declared infamous and deprived of his rights as a citizen the man who had committed adultery. Pythagoras, according to Philostratus (*Apoll.* i. 13), thought the same, and the elder Seneca employs almost the words of the Evangelist, *Incesta est etiam sine stupro quae cupit stuprum* (*Controv.* vi. 8); Epictetus (*Medit.* iii. 7) and Quintilian repeat it: *Tu alienam matronam aliter quam leges permittunt aspexisti* (*Declam.* cexi.).

³ Lucian, *Demon.* 20.

⁴ Seneca, *De Benef.* vii. 8; cf. *ibid.* i. 3, 11.

⁵ *Testis* and *μάρτυς* are synonymous.

sonably, and prevailed on the greater part of them to submit. The Athenians honored him with a magnificent funeral, and long lamented him.”¹

The Cynics were not then all “snarlers.” By their indifference towards things temporal, they had begun that war against sensualism which the Christian anchorites continued. As early as the reign of Tiberius we begin to see young profligates converted by philosophers to the strict practices of asceticism.²

All the precautions for keeping the soul awake and under control had already been discovered ; for example, daily prayer and meditation on some chosen subject, or the reading, for edification, of a philosopher’s life ; and every evening, self-examination. The Pythagoreans had long practised this powerful means of reformation. Horace speaks of it ; Seneca insists on it : “Let us examine, watch, observe, and inspect our hearts, for we ourselves are our own greatest flatterers. We should every night call ourselves to account, — What infirmity have I mastered to-day ; what passion opposed ; what temptation resisted ; what virtue acquired ? If every man would but thus look into himself it would be the better for us all.” The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius are nothing more than a dialogue with his soul : and the philosophers had so recommended this habit that Epictetus, from raillery, makes us attend at the self-examination of a foolish courtier who at night asks himself if he has employed the day well ; if he has done enough base acts ; if he ought not to flatter better, lie better, the better to secure his promotion.

It might even be said that they had their commandments, and Epictetus showed them as graven on the conscience,— a more lasting book than a table of stone or brass, if all men could read them there and conform to their precepts. “Jupiter gave thee his orders when he sent thee here : Not to covet others’ goods, to love fidelity, modesty, justice, humanity. Follow these commandments : thou needest nothing else ; thy conscience will truly be the

¹ *Demon., passim.*

² Seneca, *Epist.* 108 and 109. On the moral character of pagan philosophy in the two first centuries of the Empire, see two excellent works : *Le Christianisme et ses origines*, by M. Havet, and *Les Moralistes sous l’empire romain*, by M. Martha. Two other works, — *Histoire des théories et des idées morales dans l’antiquité* by M. Denis, and the thesis of M. Aubertin on *Sénèque et Saint Paul*, — have also shown the moral and religious value of the pagan philosophy at that period. [We may add to this list Mr. Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* (London, 1885), a very thoughtful as well as picturesque book. — ED.]

temple into which God himself has come." "What is it to be united to God?" asks Epictetus elsewhere. "It is to desire what he desires, to avoid doing what he does not wish. How is this to be reached? By well understanding his commandments." Seneca says: "Deep repentance almost restores innocence;" and Juvenal: "The sin which you desire to commit is a sin committed." These are Christian expressions. The Stoics even believed in the inheritable character of wrong-doing, in the punishment of the crime falling upon an innocent descendant, —

"Delicta majorum immeritus lues."¹

Fortunately, the juriconsults did not apply this rule. Nevertheless, this morality was that of the Pentateuch, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation;" and it may be that such a rule would still be the best, since it would establish a bond of close joint responsibility between the generations.

In social morals Plato and Aristotle had committed two great errors, — they accepted the despotism of the state and slavery.² Rome kept both, but with most important modifications. The state had become so great that the Roman citizen was lost in it, and the man was found again, with the sentiment of human dignity superior to all positive law, and that of true liberty in submission to the universal reason. Then, above the city, which still kept its members in close thralldom, there was formed a moral city, in which we shall presently see that many dwelt in spirit and in truth.

As regards slavery, the finest expressions touching the common origin of men are in Seneca's works and the discourses of Dion Chrysostom. In their minds also virtue "is not interdicted to any one; all are called to it, whether free, freedmen, or slaves . . . we all have the same father, — Heaven;" and Dionysius Cato writes: "When you buy a slave remember he is a man."³

¹ Hor., *Sat.* i. 4; Seneca, *De Ira*, iii. 26; Havet, *op. cit.* ii. 274; Denis, ii. 64 and 248; Epictet., *Diss.* i. 25; iii. 8 and *passim*; iv. 1; 6 *ad fin*; Hor., *Carm.* III. vi. 1. Elsewhere (*ibid.* I. xxviii. 30, 31) Horace says again: "Are you not afraid to leave him to atone?"

² Janet, *Histoire de la science polit. dans ses rapports avec la morale*, p. 256.

³ *Unus omnium parens mundus est* (*De Benef.* iii. 10, 28; Dionysius Cato, in the *De moribus ad filium*, iv. 44). By its doctrine of equality and responsibility before God, Christianity made masters juster and milder; but in teaching that this life was only a probation during which we ought to accept our condition, it tended to perpetuate slavery, and actually had that effect.

We have seen charity exhibited in municipal life, in the practice of the government, and in the sentiments expressed in sepulchral inscriptions; let us see it also in the theses of the doctors: "It is not sufficient to be just, one must also be benevolent even towards slaves, even towards one's enemy; you must love him who strikes you."

Listen to this really Christian utterance: "The unfortunate is hallowed;¹ he wears the sacred livery of distress."² "It is a small thing not to do harm to others. Is it very great praise of a man to say that he is kind to his fellow-man? Is there any need to repeat that we should aid the shipwrecked, show the way to the wanderer, share our bread with the hungry? What is the use of so much talk when a word suffices to teach our whole duty,—we are members of the same body, members of God?" Juvenal's harsh voice softens in speaking of a friend's afflictions, and the tears come to his eyes on meeting the coffin of the maiden carried off in her prime, at sight of the tomb in which the little child lies under the cold dark earth. He asks himself what separates us from the beasts, and replies: "It is that the good man does not regard the misfortunes of others as being matters of indifference to him."

"What sect," Seneca again said, when speaking of the new Stoicism, "what sect is more friendly to man, more solicitous for the common weal?" And Montesquieu thinks as Seneca does.

The first principle of public morality is obedience to the law; no one has spoken of this in more magnificent terms than these philosophers, who have been called rebels against the imperial authority. Some doubtless did conspire, and many of them, like a multitude of others, detested tyranny. Under Vespasian and Domitian we have seen some philosophers driven from Rome or even put to death. This was not persecution of philosophic liberty, but an affair of public order respecting malecontents who were wrongly believed to be dangerous.

¹ Seneca, *Epigr.* iv. 9: *Res est sacra miser*. We can note the progress made by the idea of charity, from Plato to Seneca, by comparing this passage with that in the *Republic*, ii. 28, in which the head of the Academy shows himself without pity for him whose misfortune was a punishment of vice or crime.

² *Ad Helviam*, 13. Ovid condemned him, *vilia qui quondam miseris alimenta negaret* (*Trist.* v. 8, 13).

In reality, the preference of the Stoics was in favor of a government by one only.¹ While it was quite natural that Seneca should show his respect for existing authority² and Epictetus his contempt for greatness, let us remember that it was a principle of the sect not to be occupied in public affairs, and one of its doctrines to submit wholly to the law, — doubtless to the law revealed by conscience and reason; but also to that which the force of events had established. It is a definition given by one of them that Justinian has placed at the head of his *Pandects*: “Law is the sovereign mistress of divine and human things, the judge of good and evil, the rule of the just and unjust; it prescribes what ought to be done, it forbids what ought not to be done.”³ These noble words go beyond the idea of ordinary justice. Chrysippus, like Cleanthes,⁴ dreams of “the law common to all beings,” of the Cosmos harmoniously ordered, including God, Nature, and man, all subjected to the law; and this submission was the faith of Marcus Aurelius. Yet the crowned sage had no doubt about his own authority, order on earth seeming to him to form part of the universal order.

The Stoics carried their heads so high only because they believed that they possessed an emanation from the Universal Reason, a spark of the divine Word. “We have our body,” said they, “in common with the animals; but our soul is a particle of the divine soul. We are sons of Jupiter, and a god is within us.”⁵ Saint Paul had expressed the same thought, though reversing its terms: “We are in God;” and it is reproduced by Malebranche as the basis of his whole philosophy.⁶

At bottom, the Stoic school, in spite of the profound differences which separate it from Christianity, makes, as the latter does, the soul predominate over the body; like Christianity, it preached separation from perishable things, and it demanded the practice of the most austere virtues. It was a teaching of renunciation

¹ Cf. p. 194.

² *Epist.* 14; *De Benef.* ii. 20: *Cum optimus status civitatis sub rege justo sit*, and in twenty other places.

³ *Digest*, i. 3, 2.

⁴ Vol. III. p. 273.

⁵ Epictetus constantly returns to this thought: cf. *Dissert.* i. 3, 9, 12; ii. 8. Manilius, in the time of Augustus, said: *An dubium est habitare deum sub pectore nostro* (*Astron.* iv. 884).

⁶ *Non longe est (Deus) ab unoquoque nostrum; in ipso enim vivimus, movemur et sumus* (*Recherche de la vérité*, lib. iii. illustration 10).

and self-denial (ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου), which, as its ideal, had an immovable serenity, complete self-control, the soul superior to every emotion (ἀταραξία).

But this virile teaching (ἀνδρωδεστάτη), which so ably delineated the theory of human duty, and carried to such a height the sentiment of the dignity of man, exceeded its aim by going beyond Nature. It demanded too many useless sacrifices and not enough useful actions. Man owes to God the development of the intelligence and activity which he has received from the divine hand. Stoicism, adapted to create hermits and martyrs, has done so; it even indirectly prepared men's souls for being martyrs in another cause. But if it had become the law of civil life it would not have formed citizens.¹ While it is an excellent law for the individual and the inner life, this disdainful philosophy would have been the worst possible law for society and social relations. Christianity has had institutions which have exhibited the same character and produced the same results. At the same time, while the best doctrines are doubtless those which at once form the man and the citizen, it is always good that a voice, a book, a school, should call us to show contempt for riches, honors, and power, and esteem for the true goods,—those of spirit and conscience.

Happily Nature leads into inconsistency minds in revolt against her, and Society resumes her rights. The Stoics of the imperial period by no means shut up their souls in a proud solitude. They wished to gain the world, and they went to it that they might bring it to themselves. Almost the whole of Seneca's work is a continuous preaching, and Persius exclaims: "From this source

¹ Seneca says (*Epist.* 5): "The end of all philosophy is to teach us to despise life;" and this contempt of life constitutes the whole teaching of Epictetus. We have already shown (Vol. V. pp. 32, 3) that both Epicureanism and Stoicism turned men away from public affairs. The vicious organization of the Empire, rendering possible tyranny such as that of the last days of Tiberius and of the reigns of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, had given a new force to the teaching which took away interest in active life. Yet if imperial despotism drove some proud minds to take refuge in the calm region of thought, it must be acknowledged that a much more general cause attracted them to it. The direction which minds take depends so little on the form of government that the greatest philosophers of the Middle Ages, of Germany and France, do not belong to periods of liberty. With what a weight did imperial despotism rest on Epictetus, Persius, Plutarch, Dion, Maximus of Tyre, and many others, like that Demetrius who braved two tyrants! Did Richelieu prevent Descartes from writing the *Discours de la Méthode*, and did Frederick II. stop the daring critical philosophy of Kant?

seek, young and old, a definite object for your minds and a provision against an unhappy old age.”¹

We have an account of the instruction given by Epictetus to a young man preparing himself for this apostleship. “Before all,” says the philosopher to his neophyte, “must the future teacher of the human race undertake himself to extinguish his own passions, and say to himself: My own soul is the material at which I must work,

as does the carpenter at wood and the shoemaker at leather.” Thus prepared, he must further know that he is Jupiter’s ambassador to men. He must preach by example, and to the disinherited who lament their lot he must be able to say: “Look at me; like you, I am without country, house, goods, slaves. I lie down on the bare ground; I have neither wife nor child, I have only the earth, heaven, and a cloak.”³ Accord-



THE INFANT HERCULES STRANGLING SERPENTS.²

ingly, for its type of divinity Stoicism had chosen, from among the lords of the old Olympus, Hercules, the destroyer of monsters, the god of strength, but of strength used for a good cause. Changed into a moral hero, the son of a mortal woman and of the father of the gods willingly aids men in destroying the animal nature in us,—passion, selfishness, anger, cruelty. “You carry within you,” Epictetus was accustomed to say, “the Erymanthean boar and the Nemean lion; subdue them.” This imagery was familiar to

¹ *Sat.* v. 64.

² Capitoline Museum.

³ *Martha, op. cit.* p. 202.

the popular preachers; we meet it again in one of Dion's discourses.¹

Thus, Stoicism had in time become an active virtue; it was animated by the spirit of proselytism, and in spreading among the multitude it had necessarily lost some of its false rigor. This current of moral philosophy which reached the depths of so many souls left there a fruitful deposit, a grand principle of honor and saving power,—respect for oneself and others, with that thought which is the religion of superior minds: "I will not violate in my own person the dignity of human nature." For this it has in its turn merited the respect of posterity. "At that time," says Montesquieu, "the sect of the Stoics spread and gained credit in the Empire. It seemed as if human nature had made an effort to produce from itself this admirable sect, which was like plants growing in places which the sun has never seen. The Romans owed to it their best emperors."²

Morality is eternal, but acquaintance with it is not so; so that progress consists less in the discovery of new principles than in the development of natural principles in the minds of a daily increasing multitude. This is the work that philosophy had undertaken, and we shall see in what measure it succeeded.

The morality of the Porch, transformed by the new spirit of the universal city, has been written down and, what is of greater worth, practised by two men, one of whom was perhaps the friend of an emperor, and the other became emperor himself. Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus are the real heroes of the Stoicism of which Seneca was only the elegant preacher, for they both conformed their lives to their teaching. We have spoken at length of the former and his *Meditations*, because it was impossible to separate his moral from his political life; and we know the judgment pronounced by Pascal on the latter, whose book was one of his favorite volumes.³ "This great mind," says Pascal, "is so well acquainted with the duties of men that we should be ready to worship him,

¹ See in Discourse iv., *De regno*, the Libyan Fable, or the monsters of Libya, half-women, half-serpents, slain by Hercules.

² *Grandeur et décadence des Romains*, chap. xvi.

³ Epictetus, who was born in the middle of the first century at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, and died about 117, was, according to Spartianus (*Hadr.* 15), the friend of Hadrian. Zeller (vol. iii. pp. 1, 960, note 4), the recent historian of philosophy, is doubtful on this point. We

had he known also his own powerlessness. . . . Since he was but dust and ashes, after having so well understood what one ought to do, see how he loses himself in the presumption of what one can do! He says that God has given to every man the means of discharging all his obligations; that these means are always in our power; that we must seek happiness from what is in our power, since God has given it to us for that end; that we must know how far our freedom extends; that property, life, esteem, are not in our power, and do not therefore lead to God, but that the mind cannot be forced to believe what it knows to be false, nor the will to love what it knows must make it unhappy; that these two powers therefore are free, and that it is by them we are able to make ourselves perfect; that by these powers man can know God perfectly, love him, obey Him, please Him, be cured of all vices, acquire all virtues, make himself holy, and thus become a companion of God.”¹

These principles, which in Pascal's estimation are “a diabolical vain-glory,” were to the pagan mind a gospel, since they taught that man can raise himself by his own strength to the highest degree of moral perfection. The popularity of the *Enchiridion*, therefore, was immense. “Everybody reads it,” said Origen in the third century, and Saint Nilus in the fourth made it the rule of his monks. This was rightly done; for in recommending celibacy to the philosophers, Epictetus prepared the way for monastic celibacy, and his work was the first step in that science of the inner life whose rules Christianity has given in another noble book, the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, which has been in turn useful and harmful to so many generous minds.

Marcus Aurelius gave moreover another characteristic to this philosophy which was already so pure, — he made it indulgent. He

have no work by Epictetus, but Arrian, his disciple, collected his teaching and has preserved it in the *Dissertations* and the *Enchiridion*, or *Manual*, which summarizes it, — a work full of noble thoughts, sometimes enhanced by the masculine beauty of the style.

¹ Pascal, *Entretien avec M. de Saci*, in his *Pensées de Pascal*, by M. Havet. Saint Ch. Borromeo read assiduously the *Manual* of Epictetus. “The whole philosophy of Epictetus,” says M. Janet (*op. cit.* p. 259), “rests on the distinction between what depends on ourselves and what does not. The actions of the soul, — volition, desire, renunciation, — are in us and belong to us; but good and evil are nothing to us. Hence we should feel a complete indifference towards these latter, which, not being in our power, ought to be to us as if they did not exist.”

placed strength in mildness and found something masculine in kindness. "Love men," said he, "with a real love;" and he reproaches himself for not having yet loved them sufficiently. It was not enough to pardon injuries, "we must love those who harm us. . . . Against ingratitude Nature arms us with gentleness. . . . If you are able, correct them; if not, remember that you possess benevolence in order to practise it towards them, and that in doing good to others you are doing it to yourself."

In the heart of Marcus Aurelius, Stoicism became a law of love; moreover, one might say that, "by him profane philosophy was led to the very confines of Christianity."¹

There are always in the world some souls who take their flight far above human interests. Six centuries earlier, Sâkyamouni had in India shown the same spirit of universal charity,² had uttered similar language respecting kindness and love, and given moral purity as the sole basis of his religion without dogma or theology, like that of Marcus Aurelius, and also like that, unhappily, without effect.

Plutarch did not belong to the Porch; his strongest attachment is to the Academy. But it is of no consequence; the doctrines were then so confused that the founders of the schools would have been unable to recognize their disciples. Plutarch has no system, and the *inania regna* of metaphysic have little attraction for him. His philosophy is restricted, and takes pleasure in the details of practical morality, receiving from any hand what can aid in the regulation of life. History serves him for nothing else; his *Lives* are practical ethics. Pure speculation, destined soon to revive, was for the time checked; but the moment is marked by a manly effort to place humanity in a better way: a grand enterprise, in which Plutarch was one of the most laborious workers. His life was simply a long teaching: orally, so long as he instructed publicly; by his writings, as long as he could write.

"These men have taken a false notion of philosophy," he says;

¹ Martha, *op. cit.* p. 263. Saint Jerome says: "The Stoics are very often in agreement with us" (*Comm. in Iesaiam*, chap. x.).

² The same spirit exists in the ancient Egyptian religion. The supreme virtue demanded of the Egyptians at the last judgment was charity; the ritual employs on this point the same expressions as the Evangelist, — to give bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, shelter to the homeless, etc. (Chabas, in the *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des inscr.*, 1873, p. 63).

“they make it much like the art of statuary, whose business it is to carve out a lifeless image in the most exact figure and proportions, and then to raise it upon its pedestal, where it is to continue forever. True philosophy is of quite a different nature: it is a spring and principle of motion wherever it comes; it makes men

A DANAID.²

active and industrious; it sets every wheel and faculty going; it stores our minds with axioms and rules by which to make a sound judgment; it determines the will to the choice of what is honorable and just; and it brings all our faculties to the swiftest prosecution of it.”¹ As Christianity was already doing, he preaches immortality. “Epicurus,” he says, “doth but further cut off all hope of immortality, to compass which (I can scarce refrain from saying) all men and women would be well content to be worried by Cerberus and to carry water into the tub full of holes, so they might but continue in being, and not be exter-

minated.”³ From Chaeroneia went forth unceasingly counsels, consolations, directions even for public life. “The Egyptians,” he says, “used to exhibit the sick person before his house, in order that the passers-by might point out to him how they had been cured.”

¹ In the treatise: *Cum principibus philosophandum esse*, 1.

² Statue in the Vatican.

³ In the treatise: *Non posse suaviter*, etc., sect. 27.

He thought it right that every one should likewise benefit others by his own experience for the cure of the soul's ills.¹

Thus, in a small town of Boeotia and in the capital of the world, in the Emperor's palace, under the gilded roof of a minister, and in the humble abode of a philosopher, the same thoughts exercised men's minds, here written in Latin, there in Greek, but equally traversing the world. As in every civilized society is found nearly an equal amount of human frailties, it is by the ideal that a people proposes to itself, much more than by individual failures, that we mark the level of a nation's morality. To history personal responsibilities exist. But if this ideal is a lofty one, if it has a virtue that charms and attracts, form your judgment by it in all confidence, even though there be contrary facts. Is it by Torquemada or by the Gospel that Christianity should be judged?

The philosophers placed their ideal high,² and it is plain they desired to lead men to it, since they undertook the duty of carrying on the moral education of Roman society.

Philosophy, like the Church of the present day, had found four means of acting on the world. It furnished families of distinction, with spiritual directors and preceptors. For those who could not afford the luxury of a philosopher in the house, it had spiritual directors who received visits for consultation, and masters who opened schools; for the masses, its missionaries travelled about the country; and on important occasions its preachers of note undertook to edify the court and city. Do not be surprised at these words. Though they have an ecclesiastical sound, what they indicate was much in use in pagan Rome.

¹ Gréard, *De la Morale de Plutarque*, especially seet. 2 of cap. 1.

² M. Denis thus sums up the belief of the philosophers of that time: "To know God and to love him, to place one's liberty in obedience to the laws of the sovereign Master, and this obedience in resignation, self-respect, and in love for men; to attend to the purity of the soul, and daily practise self-examination; to yield oneself, as regards all that does not depend on a man's will, to Providence, and heartily to pray the Father of gods and men to come to the aid of virtue: this is the true worship that the sages paid to the Eternal Reason" (*op. cit.* ii. 248). In cap. xvii. of his *Histoire des religions de la Grèce ancienne*, M. Maury has collected a mass of evidence proving that "all the moral ideas which Christianity has sanctioned were already found more or less developed in the teaching of the poets and of the pagan worship" (vol. iii. p. 62). M. Havet proves the same (*op. cit.* vol. ii. eapp. xiv. and xv.). In fact, man invents nothing new in morality, because there are not two human natures; but, with time, principles are more clearly distinguished, and are practised by a larger number. In that alone consists moral progress, and this progress serves to estimate the relative worth of civilizations.

The resident philosopher, "the friend," as an inscription terms him,¹ the *monitor*, the "soul's guardian,"² sometimes also addressed as "my father,"³ was an inmate of all the great houses, and Persius has pointed out in splendid words what moral influence he could there exercise.⁴ In an earlier period, men sometimes read the *Phaedo* on their death-beds, as did Cato of Utica. Now, the *Phaedo* was in the library, but, besides, a man had his counsellor at his side, ready to apply it, in whatever might be the circumstances, — like Canus, whose marvellous peace of mind we have mentioned, and who on the way to execution was accompanied "by his philosopher." Plautus, Thræsea, we find at their last moments dismissing their wives and relations that they might converse with a philosopher on those grave questions which then occupied men's thoughts, as now we call a priest to our bed-side to receive some comfort for the final journey.

Seneca well describes this new character of philosophy which avoids the discussions of the school.⁵ "Truly, this is not the time to be amused with feats of dialectics: philosopher, it is the infirm and wretched who send for thee. Thou oughtest to bring help to the shipwrecked, the captives, the needy, the sick, to those whose head is already under the axe: thou didst promise this. To all those fine discourses which thou canst supply, these afflicted ones answer in one word: Succor us. Towards thee do they stretch forth their hands; from thee they implore assistance respecting a life lost or about to be so; in thee alone are their hopes. They beseech thee to raise them from the abyss in which they are struggling, and to hold up before their wandering feet the wholesome light of truth."

Philosophy even aspired to penetrate into the court. Plutarch urged its claims to do this. "If the sage," he says, "whose

¹ *Q. Aelio Egrilio Evareto philosopho, amico Salvi Juliani* (Henzen, No. 5,600). This Salvius Julianus, the son of the author of the perpetual Edict, was, according to Borghesi, consul in 175.

² . . . *Sit ergo aliquis custos* (Seneca, *Epist.* 94), and *opus est adjutore . . . coactore* (*ibid.* 52). See all that Aulus Gellius, who is not an enthusiast, relates of the relations of Taurus with his disciples; he had been a witness of them (i. 26; vii. 13; x. 19; xvii. 8; xviii. 10; xx. 4). Epictetus did not spare his disciples any sort of reprimand (*Convers.* i. 16; iii. 1; iv. 2).

³ At least, that is the name given by Seneca to Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and by Apuleius to the priest who had initiated him into the mysteries of Isis.

⁴ Persius, *Sat.* v.

⁵ Denis, *op. cit.* ii. 66.

intercourse is confined to individuals, gives them serenity, calm, and sweetness, he who shall put the soul of a prince in the right direction will extend to a whole people the benefit of his philosophy." Long before his time it had been known there. Augustus had "his philosopher," Areus, the confidant of all his thoughts, "of all his soul's movements." When Livia lost her son Drusus, it was of him she asked consolation in her grief.¹ Nero had Seneca — who for some time restrained the young Emperor's evil tendencies — and many others whose disputes Tacitus asserts that he took pleasure in exciting.² Nerva, Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius were surrounded by philosophers who had an official position, were counted among the Emperor's friends (*comites*), and, like them, received a stipend, whence Lucian derives a pretext to accuse them of greediness.³ They were not unlike the almoners of the French kings. It seems that under Trajan the post could not have been very lucrative. However, this Emperor was disposed to listen to the most illustrious of them, Dion Chrysostom. We still possess the discourse which the philosopher addressed to him on the duties of royalty, which Pope Nicholas V. caused to be translated into Latin for his own use.

Many opened schools, in some cases charging fees, in others making their instruction gratuitous.⁴ The former derived a profit from their learning which we regard as legitimate, but which the austere blamed. Nigrinus speaks contemptuously of those who "become philosophers for hire, and sell virtue, as it were, in the public market;" their schools he calls shops and taverns, saying that those who pretended to teach others to despise riches should above all men be themselves free from venality.⁵

Others, after the example of Epictetus and this Nigrinus, one of those rare philosophers who found favor with Lucian, lived in poor dwellings, philosophizing quite alone or with those whom their renown attracted, and who came to submit to them cases of conscience. Aulus Gellius, employed by the praetor to decide in a difficult case, finds himself in great embarrassment; proofs are

¹ Seneca, *Ad Marc.* 4: *Philosopho viri sui.* . . . Seneca represents Areus as saying to Livia that he has known . . . *omnes quoque secretiores animorum vestrorum motus.*

² *Ann.* xiv. 16.

³ *The Parasite*, 52.

⁴ *Vies des anciens orateurs grecs*, by Bréquigni, ii. 140.

⁵ Lucian, *Nigr.* 25.

wanting. Shall he decide according to the well-known morals of the two adversaries? He adjourns the matter and hastens to consult his master, Favorinus.¹

The philosopher was sent for in times of affliction, and Dion complains that men waited until then. "Just as remedies are bought only in a serious illness, so they neglect the philosopher so long as they are not too unhappy. Take the case of a rich man. He has a large income or vast domains, good health, wife and children doing well, credit, authority: this prosperous man feels no desire to listen to a philosopher. But let him lose his fortune or his health, he will then more readily give ear to wise counsels; let now his wife or son or brother be at death's door, oh! then he begs the philosopher to come, he will send for him to obtain some consolation, to learn from him how to support so many misfortunes."²

Lastly, philosophy had its wandering missionaries, who carried it with the eloquence and ardor of the Christian apostolate to all parts of the Empire, equally to small and great, even to women and slaves.³ Often was to be seen appearing in the circus, in the theatre, in public assemblies, a Sophist who demanded silence "in the name of immortal Nature, whose faithful interpreter he was." He was thought to be "a divine messenger," like the Christian preachers whom Bossuet grandly calls "God's ambassadors," and he said to the noisy crowd: "Listen to me! You will not always find a man to come to you with free truth, without concern for glory or money, with no other motive than his solicitude for you, and resolution to bear, if need be, jeers, tumult, and clamor."⁴ It could not have been the gratification of a childish vanity which these popular orators desired. Musonius loved to repeat: "When a philosopher exhorts, warns, advises, and blames, or gives a lesson in morality, if the audience, entranced by the graces of his style, overwhelms him with foolish praise, be sure that all are then wasting their time. I no longer see a philosopher teaching souls,

¹ *Noct. Att.* xiv. 2.

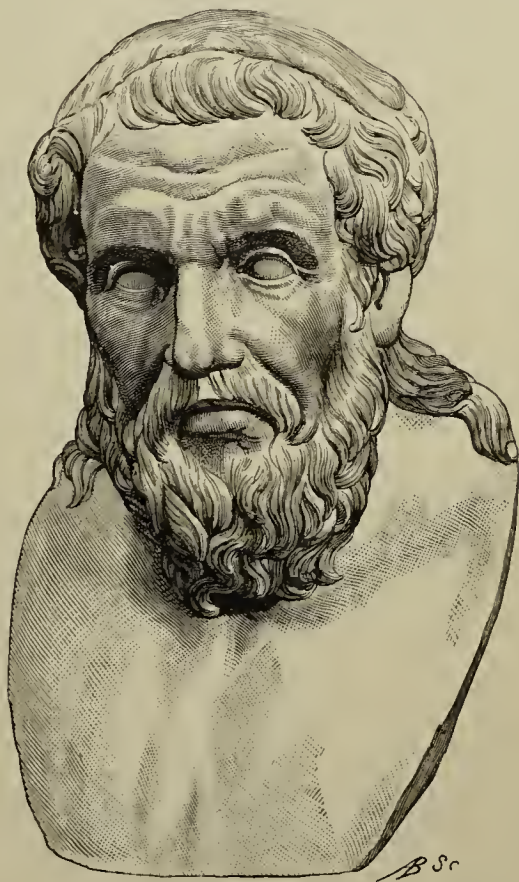
² *Orat.* xxvii. Cf. Martha, *op. cit.* p. 301.

³ *Senserunt hoc stoici qui servis et mulieribus philosophandum esse dicebant* (Lactantius, *Inst. div.* iii. 23). Cf. Martha, p. 294.

⁴ These are the words of Dion (*Orat.* xxxii.), and he was very sincere, for he urged the other philosophers to address themselves to the multitude (*εις πλῆθος*). Cf. Martha, pp. 294 and 304, note 1.

but a flute-player tickling men's ears. . . . When the words are useful and salutary, the audience listens in silence."¹ This is like the severe requirements of Christian preaching.

The most famous of these nomadic preachers were Dion Chrysostom and Apollonius of Tyana. The latter has a bad name at the present time; he has been called the "Don Quixote of philosophy, riding through the world in quest of struggles and adventures,"² and Philostratus has strewed his path with miracles which make us smile. But when we set him free from the legendary character with which later generations invested him in order to place him in opposition to the Christian God, he remains a visionary, perhaps, but without question a man who, by his asceticism and morality, approaches closely to Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. "He went about," says his biographer, "redressing the ill he met with, and everywhere holding wholesome discourse with those who listened to him."⁴



APOLLONIUS OF TYANA.³

Dion, who had at first been only a rhetorician greedy of praise, when once he had become a convert to philosophy, carried his new faith everywhere, even into Trajan's palace, where he spoke with the legitimate pride which was given him by his exile, his laborious life in the midst of the Barbarians, and his constant warfare on behalf of moral truth.

¹ Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* v. 1.

² L'abbé Freppel, *Apol. chrét.* p. 94.

³ Marble bust in the Museum of Naples.

⁴ *Apoll.* iv. 4. Philostratus represents him (iv. 2) seeking to persuade the Ephesians to give up all for philosophy, and a little later narrates his charming parable of the birds who give warning and aid to one another. It reads like a Gospel text.

"Do not fear," he used to say,¹ "that I wish to flatter you. Formerly, when all men believed themselves obliged to lie, I alone had no fear of speaking the truth at the peril of my life; and now that I am permitted to speak freely I should be truly inconsistent did I give up my freedom when it is tolerated! And why lie? To obtain money, praises, glory? But money I have never consented to receive, and my fortune I have given up."

And when we find him placing beneficence in the front rank of the duties of royalty, we remember that Trajan was the founder of an institution of charity, and that the Antonines modified all the laws of the Empire in the interests of humanity. Eighty of Dion's discourses have come down to us, in which are revealed the honorable man, the good citizen, the accomplished orator, and the irreproachable moralist.

A little later than this, Ulpian says of the jurisconsults: They are the priests of the law. Seneca had already said of the philosophers: They are the priests of truth,² true prophets,³ truly inspired; and they supported this character so well that Plutarch repeats the expression. Are we justified in thinking that this great labor was useless, that this vigorous effort to lead society into a better way did not at all succeed in doing so? The preaching quietly begun at Rome by Cicero in the name of duty, by Horace in the name of good sense, so brilliantly continued during the Early Empire, from Thræsea to Marcus Aurelius, in the name of the dignity of human nature and its most elevated sentiments, produced the moral reaction which so many facts have shown us. All these Roman sermonizers of the first two centuries certainly effected numerous conversions. At the same time, in the midst of this society confused by so many different religions, the disagreement, always great between doctrines and conduct, continued more conspicuous than it has been at other periods in which one belief and one discipline prevailed.

¹ *Orat. i.* Cf. Martha, p. 303.

² *Antistites* (*Quæst. nat. vii. 32*), and *hæc litteræ . . . infularum loco sunt* (*Epist. 14, 11*). Plutarch felt himself to act in a priestly character as regards those who consulted him, and, not satisfied with regarding the philosopher as a priest, he places him even higher than that, — not without reason, for the pagan priests were never anything but celebrants, who abandoned religious and moral teaching, at first to the poets, later to the philosophers.

³ *De Vita beata, 27*. Galen similarly understood the philosopher's functions. See Daremberg, *Galien consulté comme philosophe*, p. 17.

This singular elergy, as we may call them, without hierarchy or rules, without dogma or theology, went their way at random, according to the inspiration and tastes of each. Many impostors were included in it, finding in this profession the means of living in idleness.¹ There were also visionaries and fools, like that Peregrinus who from vanity mounted a funeral pile at Olympia.² Hence we need not wonder that the philosophers excited the ridicule of Lucian, as the monks did that of Erasmus and Hutten. Tatian, a Christian who became afterwards a teacher of heresy, said of them: "What is there so grand about your philosophers? I see nothing extraordinary in them, except that they let their hair grow long, refrain from cutting their beards, and have nails as long as animals' claws. They announce that they need no one; yet they require a currier for their wallet, a turner for their staff, a tailor for their cloak, rich men and a good cook for their greediness. This grand philosopher declaims with assurance, insults those who refuse him, and if one has done him wrong he avenges himself."³

The satire, truly, is not malicious, and we admit that there were more follies, even vices, than Tatian points out. Lucian has said much more about them.⁴ But men do not attack what is dead, and philosophy must have been singularly alive at this period to cause the satirist of Samosata so often to take the philosophers to task. Besides, he is the enemy of individual philosophers, but not of philosophy itself. In one of his most entertaining satires he represents Philosophy as coming to complain to her father Jupiter of the treatment she has suffered at the hands of certain persons. "The multitude," she says, "have long held me in the highest esteem and veneration; I have been almost adored by them, although they did not fully understand me. But there are some—what shall I call them?—who take my name upon them, wear the mask of friendship, and pretend to be my intimate acquaintance. These are the men who have used me most cruelly. . . . Their lives are infamous, full of ignorance, impudence, and vice. These are the greatest disgraces to me; by them I have been injured,

¹ Aulus Gellius, ix. 2; Lucian, *Eunuch*, 8, 9. In this passage Lucian says that the philosophers accepted as official professors received from the Emperor a stipend of 10,000 drachmae.

² *Id.*, *Peregr.*

³ Tillemont, ii. 460.

⁴ Especially in the *Icaromenippus*.

and from them, O father, I have fled.”¹ The pitiless scoffer himself affirms the importance of the genuine philosophic teaching, at once popular and elevated, which took the place of that which the priests did not supply. During two centuries philosophy was at Rome, as in France after Louis XIV., the religion of polite society, and the Emperors so thoroughly recognized its utility that they granted official immunities to the philosophers.²

Thus, whether it was that the Romans had spread their organizing spirit among the provincials, or that in the religious anarchy of the times the peoples had sought a fixed point where troubled conscience could rest, it came about that general reason, elaborated in the minds of a few eminent men, had set free from the mass of legends and of metaphysics a system of ethics, rules of conduct, a purely human religion, almost without a God, but not without efficacy. A writer of authority has said: “Philosophy had become so practical, so attentive to the most delicate wants of the soul, so enamoured of inner perfection, that its teaching, in spite of the diversity of dogma, deserves the honor of being compared with the Christian rule of life.”³

The philosophers had, therefore, clearly seen that it was necessary, first of all, to interest themselves in the task of the moral improvement of the individual, and that to make society better, they must begin by making men better.⁴ The whole social reform was to them, as it ought to be to us, a question of education. Their preaching, combined with the efforts made with the same intention by the Flavians and the Antonines, had brought back into many houses that strict virtue to whose restoration Tacitus bears witness, showing us once more an honorable social state where we had expected to see only profligacy and corruption. Humanity was therefore itself seeking its own salvation; and from Socrates to Marcus Aurelius some had found it,—those whose “naturally Christian souls” resembled the wise to whom the tradition of the Church promised the blessed life.⁵

¹ *The Fugitives*, 3 and 12.

² Pliny, *Epist.* x. 66.

³ Martha, *op. cit.* p. 70. On the whole question of the moral philosophy of the period of the Antonines, see also Friedländer, iii. 543–612.

⁴ See *Progrès et morale*, by F. Bouillier, p. 328.

⁵ Cf. Pabbé Gerbet, *Des Doctrines philosophiques sur la certitude*, pp. 37 and 106. A number of Fathers of the Church had declared that the pagan philosophy was a preparation for the Catholic faith.

III. — THE STATE RELIGION.

MAN is a religious being because his reason shows him a law beneath phenomena; in the law, a cause and a consequence, that is to say, a power and a result,—two things which are blended with each other to constitute order; and this supposes an Orderer who has made the properties of matter concur in producing a determinate effect. This concatenation of things even the savage perceives confusedly, but in a way which impresses his mind, and all religions result from this sort of unconscious reflection. *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei* is the involuntary cry of humanity; all the science of the philosophers is contained in these four words.

In the presence of the incomprehensible there was then early awakened an insatiable curiosity, as from death was born the fear of destruction. On the one hand, man desired to know; on the other, he desired to survive. Even when he has not had a clear view of an immortal life, he has yet sought to secure in the struggles of the present the help of divine beings, seeking to gain favor by the worship which he has offered them. The religions have sprung, from the earliest days of the world, from this need, this fear, and this self-interest.¹ The sentiment of the divine, with the hopes it gives of salvation² here on earth or in another life, exists in the depths of human nature, and the vain but noble search into what precedes and what follows this life³

¹ *Primus in orbe deos fecit terror* (Statius, *Thebaid*, iii. 661). As concerns self-interest we find it in all the invocations, which, from India to Italy, are almost identical. "It is less a question of obtaining the good-will than of enchainning the liberty of the god. The Brahmin who knows the ritual does as he likes with Heaven, and by means of Heaven he is master of the world. The Italiot, without going so far, believes that if he continue faithful to all the sacred prescriptions, the god on his part can also not fail in his duty" (Bréal, *Les Tables Eugubines*).

² The word *salus* had especially the meaning of "conservation, prosperity, healing." See the forms of prayer which are found in Cato (*De Re rust.* 141), and a number of inscriptions *pro salute principis*.

³ Strabo, in explaining the origin of religions, says: *φιλειδήμων γὰρ ἄνθρωπος* (I. ii. 8); and man has been defined a "religious animal."

is the characteristic sign of humanity. Together sorrow and religion began; together they will end.

This great human fact has had two consequences, — one for society, the other for the individual. The religious sentiment, being extremely complex, contains both fear and love, carefulness and carelessness,¹ selfishness and self-surrender, pride and humility. According as one or another of these elements has gained the mastery, the sacerdotal classes have in different countries presented very different characteristics, from the humblest anchorite to the implacable pontiff who rules all in the state and regards his own thoughts as inspirations from on high. On the other hand, the essential element of a religion is the marvellous, since the unknown and the inaccessible form the domain reserved for the gods. Hence it has followed that in all times, even in an entirely scientific age, under all forms, even the strangest, faith in the supernatural has existed. The grave Strabo says: "The poets have not been alone in inventing legends; the magistrates, legislators, have also, in the common interest, spread them among the peoples: the more marvellous they are, the more they are liked. . . . Women and the masses, not being led to piety by philosophy, are induced by superstition; and the latter possesses efficacy only by the fables and miracles which are commingled with it."² Strabo is wrong; the peoples themselves make their legends, just as they make their language, and the poets, the enthusiasts, the clever believers, serve later on only to arrange them.

Now the philosophers in the time of the Empire who wished to found a religion, those especially of the dominant school, were absolutely destitute of this effective instrument. With its vacant heaven, since its gods were only a blind fatality; with its manly teaching of duty, destitute of other reward than that of a satisfied conscience; with its proud attitude towards destiny, from which it asked nothing;

¹ The Romans lived with their gods as the *lazzaroni* do with their saints. At the *lectisternia* they ate with them; at the games of the circus they brought their statues to take part in the festival. Dion (xlvii. 40) relates that at the time of the battle of Philippi the car of Minerva was broken while the goddess was on the way back from the circus to the Capitol.

² Strabo, *ibid.* Maximus of Tyre says the same thing (*Dissert.* x. 165, edit. Reiske). Plutarch (*Marr. Prec.* 19), following Plato's idea (*Laws*, x. 15), recommends Pollianus not to allow his young wife to introduce into his house minute devotions and strange superstitions. In the dialogue of Minucius Felix, the pagan also reproaches the Christians for abusing the credulity of women.

and in face of the void into which it looked without fear, — Stoicism was made for choice spirits only, and not for the mass. “Two things,” says Kant, “fill the human mind with awe, — the starry heavens above, and the moral law within.” Of these two things the Stoics looked only at the second, and that, too, in a way peculiar to themselves. Thus this morality without dogma, this philosophy without metaphysics, this reason without the marvellous, which contented itself with requiring of human nature an impossible perfection, had no hold on uncultivated minds, or seemed insufficient to souls tormented by the need of a higher ideal. It is said in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, “Faith is the evidence of things not seen,” and the teaching of Tertullian may be summed up in one profound expression: *Credo quia absurdum*,¹ I believe, although I do not understand. In Stoicism everything was comprehensible; it could not therefore bring the world over: and when it entered upon a struggle with religious teaching which opened the heavens which Aristotle, Epicurus, and Zeno had closed, it was conquered in advance.

Did polytheism preserve at least enough strength to keep that society which it had held during so many centuries and by such powerful ties, or were its marvels worn out by their long use?

Hellenism had for ages cradled infancy with pious stories or terrible legends, charmed the imagination and the senses by ceremonial pomp, and held men's hearts by that poetry of the heavens which so well responds to our instinctive ideal, or subdued minds by the terrors of Erebus. But a time came when the vague pleasures of the Elysian Fields seemed insufficient, and Jupiter's thunderbolts very blind. This great god of the Aryan race was losing his worshippers, and the statues of the other gods stood insecurely like his own within the sacred enclosures. All was silence and solitude around these ancient lords of the world, and the paths to the temples were overgrown with grass. Yet between life and death a religion always traverses an intermediate state, which may last for centuries. Already mortally smitten by doubt, it seemed still to live in men's habitudes. Man with his reason drifts away, or, like the statesman, grants nothing but a formal adhesion. Woman, who is all feeling, remains at the temple with her faith, and keeps

¹ For example, in the *De Carne Christi*, 5: *Prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est; certum est, quia impossibile est.* Just before, he says of himself, *feliciter stultum.*

her child there. In all religions the heart has made women the priestesses of the first and last hours.

That paganism had long been in that state for the learned, and even "for the vulgar," Juvenal is on the point of saying.¹ Not having, like the Jews, a precise creed contained in a book, nor, like Egypt and India, a clergy who preserved and defended it, polytheism had seen the new society, which asked to be taught



SCENES FROM THE ELYSIAN FIELDS.²

something, desert its cold and empty temples, where nothing was taught. Then came the magnificent outburst of the philosophic spirit, which left no way untrodden through which there was hope of attaining the truth, and explored all these paths, let us remember, with the utmost freedom, the Emperor never taking offence at any philosophic audacity. At last, worn out with so many vain researches, this powerful spirit gave up ambitious theories, as it had given up popular beliefs, and sank into a state of doubt. We

¹ *Sat.* xiii. 35.

² On an Italo-Greek vase in the Museum of Munich.

know what was the religion of Lucretius, of Cicero, and of Caesar, and what the Pontifex Maximus Scaevola and Varro thought of the state worship. The elder Pliny is clearly an atheist. In his opinion God, if there be a God, is destiny, or what he calls the power of Nature; and he divides men into two classes,—those who do not take the gods into account at all, and those who form a shameful idea of them.¹ The affecting honors to the dead cannot even move this passionless mind: “Our vanity makes our existence last beyond the tomb; we concede consciousness to departed spirits, and make into a god what has even ceased to be man.”²

Juvenal³ scorns both “the herd of gods” and some of their worshippers. Tacitus hesitates between contrary doctrines; but the younger Pliny does not hesitate, and if his friend had left us letters in place of histories, which demanded conventional language, we should doubtless see in them the same religious indifference. It is a remarkable thing that in the two hundred and forty-seven letters of Pliny⁴ there is not one serious reference to the gods. Religion, considered as a moral influence, had no existence for him. He will indeed buy a statue to decorate a public place in Como; he will rebuild near his domains a ruined sanctuary; he will build a temple at Tifernum to make a show of munificence: but of the government of the world by the gods, of the influence of religion upon life, he is regardless, and he is quite willing to say with Lucan: “To talk of Jupiter’s royalty is to lie; there is no god who shows care for human affairs.”⁵ Pliny believes in literature, in honor, probity, and all the civic virtues, and he leaves the immortals to vegetate on Olympus. He does not discuss them as a philosopher, he does not honor them as a believer. They are for him as if they were not, unless he has some public function to perform, where they make part of the traditional ceremonial. Horace in his *Odes* appears as a zealous pagan: mythological piety is one of the conditions of lyric poetry; but when he thinks for himself his

¹ *Hist. nat.* ii. 5. Varro Atacinus wrote:—

*Marmoreo in tumultu Licinus jacet, at Cato parvo,
Pompeius nullo. Quis putet esse deos?*

(Fragment of the *Poetae lat. min.* vol. iv. edit. Lemaire.)

² *Hist. nat.* vii. 56.

³ *Sat.* xiii. 46 and 86.

⁴ Except the tenth book.

⁵ *Mentimur regnare Jovem . . . mortalia nulli sunt curata deo* (*Phars.* vii. 447 et seq.).

gods make a sad figure, living in a peaceful indifference as regards men,¹ and without sadness he sees their old sanctuaries crumbling into ruins.²

BACCHUS.³

The author of the *Ars Amoris* undertook, in a time of penitence, to write the *Fasti*; yet he could not refrain from laughing at the devotees who, with a few drops of lustral water,

¹ *Sat.* I. v. 101-103. Long before him Plautus had said: "They relate their misfortunes to the Night, the Day, the Sun, the Moon, who, I believe, do not at all concern themselves about human griefs, our vows and our fears." (*Mercator*, Prolog.)

² *Templa ruunt antiqua deum* (*Sat.* ii. 2, v. 104).

³ From a painting at Pompeii recently discovered. The *Gazette archéologique* of 1880 has published it in colors, and added a learned dissertation.

“believed they blotted out their acts of perjury;”¹ and to relate, as Ovid does, the *Metamorphoses* of the gods, there was needed facile verse and very slight piety. Apuleius, a sort of mystic, avows that the ignorant crowd is wanting in respect for the gods, whether showing superstitious reverence or an insolent contempt for them.²



NEPTUNE AND MINERVA.³

Petronius goes farther: he knows how the masters of Olympus were made; and the narrative is not an edifying one. He says: “Fear was the origin of the gods. Mortals had seen the lightning falling from heaven’s heights, overthrowing walls and setting on fire the peaks of Athos; the sun, after having crossed the heavens,

¹ *Fasti*, v. 681, and ii. 45.

² *De Deo Socr.* Pliny (97 *ad finem*) writes to Trajan that the temples are greatly neglected. Plutarch, under Hadrian, wrote a treatise on the decay of the oracles.

³ From one of the most beautiful cameos in the *Cabinet de France*. Cf. Chabouillet, *Catal. gén.*, etc., No. 36.

returning to its rest; the moon growing old and decreasing, to reappear in its splendor. Hence images of the gods everywhere became numerous. The change of seasons which divide the year still more increased the superstition; the laborer, dupe of a great error, offered to Ceres the firstfruits of his crop, and crowned Bacchus with purple grapes. Pales was decorated by the shepherd's hands, Neptune had for empire the sea's expanse, and Diana laid claim to the forests."¹ The gods are therefore of human creation, and from earth men reached to heaven. Here at least Petronius is serious in his impiety; elsewhere he is very irreverent. When Eumolpus, one of his heroes, gives two gold pieces to the old woman whose goose he has killed, he says to her: "With this you can buy geese and gods as many as you please." Many limited their hopes to desiring for themselves what a Macedonian from his tomb wished to passers-by: "Life and health to you."²

A considerable school, that of Epicurus, absolutely denied the existence of divine beings, and "gave peace to the soul, setting it free from the terrors inspired by prodigies and phantoms, and banishing chimerical hopes and foolish desires."³ Another, that of Zeno, hardly separated God from Nature, or rather identified him with the world of which he was the invisible soul; and some poets, Manilius in his *Astronomica*, perhaps the pious Vergil,⁴ adhered to this mighty doctrine of pantheism, which has appeared in all ages of the world to explain the inexplicable problem of metaphysics, — the co-existence of the finite and the infinite, of nature and God, of human liberty and divine providence. Hadrian doubtless held this belief, he who built temples without images or name: a sign of his contempt for the state mythology, of his respect for the impersonal God diffused throughout the universe, — who did not, however, reveal to the Emperor at his last hour the secret of the grave. In truth Plato, Aristotle, and all the philosophers had more or less guardedly made breaches in the

¹ *Fragm.* xxvii.

² Ζῆ καὶ ὑγίαινε (Heuzey, *Mission de Macédoine*, p. 39).

³ Lucian, *Thoughts of Epicurus*.

⁴ . . . *Spiritus unus per cunctas habitat partes.*

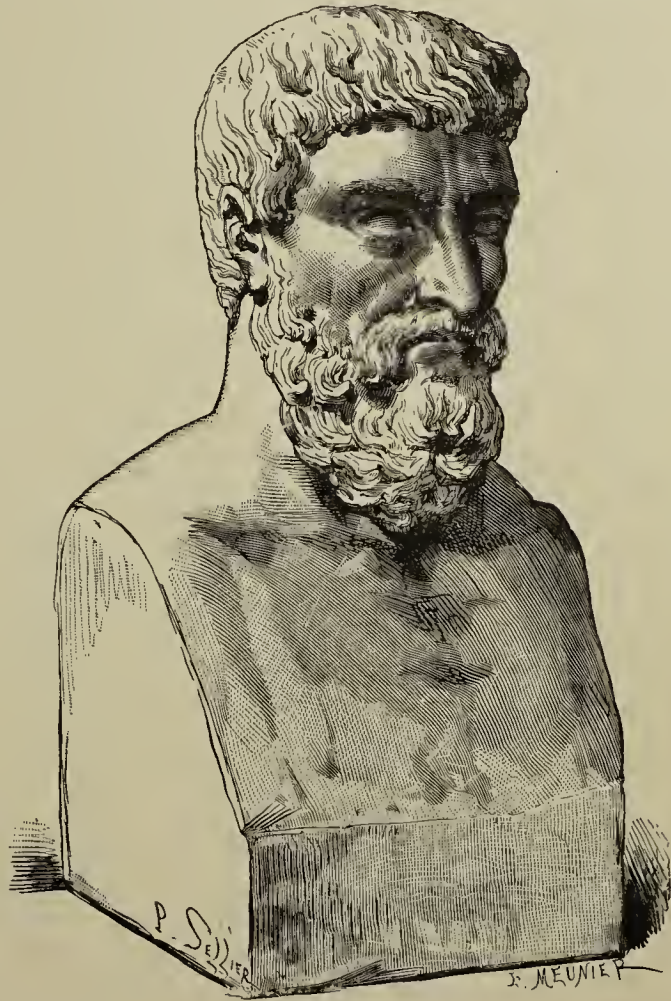
(Manilius, *Astr.* ii. 58.)

Spiritus intus alit; totamque infusa per artus

Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.

(Vergil, *Aen.* vi. 726.)

state polytheism. Their works, however, appeal only to the higher class of minds, they were not current with the crowd; but the little *Dialogues* of Lucian spread everywhere. This disciple of Epicurus had made it his special duty to pursue all charlatans, impostors, and superstitious persons. When he made such sharp attacks upon the old divinities which were passing away, as well as against those which attempted to fill their places, he was certainly an echo of public sentiment, and we know that his books were eagerly read. His is not the cold and inexorable criticism of Kant, which respectfully destroys systems and dethrones God. Lucian belongs to that family of bold and alert spirits who laugh while they destroy. Listen to what he makes Timon say to Jupiter:² "Nobody now sacrifices to you, or offers you garlands, except perhaps some person at the Olympic games, and he does it, not because he thinks it duty, but merely because it is an old custom. In a little time, most generous of deities as you are, you will let them dethrone you as Saturn was dethroned. I forbear mentioning their sacrilegious attacks on your temple, or their laying hands even upon yourself at Olympia, when you, the great Thunderer, never so much as set on the dogs, nor called in your neighbors to help you take the thieves when they ran away. The noble giant-queller and conqueror of the Titans sat quietly

EPICURUS.¹

say to Jupiter:² "Nobody now sacrifices to you, or offers you garlands, except perhaps some person at the Olympic games, and he does it, not because he thinks it duty, but merely because it is an old custom. In a little time, most generous of deities as you are, you will let them dethrone you as Saturn was dethroned. I forbear mentioning their sacrilegious attacks on your temple, or their laying hands even upon yourself at Olympia, when you, the great Thunderer, never so much as set on the dogs, nor called in your neighbors to help you take the thieves when they ran away. The noble giant-queller and conqueror of the Titans sat quietly

¹ Marble bust in the Museum of the Louvre.² *Timon*, 4.

with his thunderbolt of ten cubits length in his hand, and let them pull the hair off his head."

Rabelais, Ariosto, Cervantes thus by their ridicule gave the death-blow to the expiring Middle Ages; Voltaire and Beaumarchais thus made an end of the *ancien régime*, which was at the point of death. Had they appeared too soon, these merciless scoffers would have met no sympathy, and would have been pilloried or burned; but coming at the right time, they performed in society the function which Nature intrusts to those processes of fermentation which hasten decomposition. But life comes forth from death; the *Dialogues* of Lucian, fatal to paganism, helped to clear the ground for a new faith.¹

It was in fact impossible that this audacious mockery of popular beliefs should not have done much to shatter them.² The sculptors and painters still made great use of the old figures of the Hellenic legends, because these personages, with their adventures, their features, their costumes, were admirably adapted to plastic representation. The poets, less fortunate, no longer gave pleasure with their mythological rubbish. Yet men continued to build temples, but for architectural reasons, to embellish a city or decorate a public square; they offered sacrifices and, like Atticus Herodes, even hecatombs, but from ostentation and by way of pretext for giving a festival to the public; ancient rites were performed, but merely from obedience to tradition. Even the sceptic, in a time of fear, was for a moment devout, and for reasons of policy the statesman was always a believer.³

At these periods of reformation the multitude of the timid and

¹ See especially *Jupiter the Tragedian*, *the Aerial Voyage*, *the Assembly of the Gods*; and against the charlatans, the history of Alexander of Abonotichos and of his god-serpent Glycon.

² Philostratus exhibits (i. 2) Apollonius endeavoring to re-establish the worship in the deserted temples. The oracle of Delphi long continued dumb . . . *Quoniam Delphis oracula cessant* (Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 555); and when the Pythia, in Trajan or Hadrian's reign, began again to speak, it was habitually in simple prose, and no longer in verse. In place of three ancient priestesses, one now sufficed. Cf. Plutarch, *On the εἶ*, the treatise *Why the Pythia no longer replies in Verse*, and that *On the Decadence of the Oracles*.

³ Horace was frightened at the fall of a tree and at a thunderclap being heard in a clear sky. Sylla, the sacrilegious plunderer of the temples at Delphi, drew from his bosom, in a perilous moment, a gold image of Apollo which he had stolen, and addressed urgent prayer to it. Caesar, a sceptic, ascends the steps of the Capitol on his knees, to disarm the anger of Nemesis.

the simple forms a mass obstinately opposed to new ideas. In his dialogue Minucius Felix introduces a pagan interlocutor who intends to continue faithful to the national customs, out of habit and respect for the law, and also because — knowing, like Socrates, that he knows nothing — he does not wish to innovate in such doubtful matters, nor reason on subjects which elude the reasoning process. This is a cautious man. The simple folk, such as the peasants in the heart of the country, the lower classes in the towns, poor people everywhere, remained faithful to the national faith, to their Penates, discreet witnesses of the domestic life, to the protecting Manes of their ancestors, to the quiet old rural divinities with whom an interested or timid piety associated the Augusti, the new gods of the Empire. When they passed before the temples of the cities, the chapels of the small towns, the holy places standing at intervals along the roads, were it but a rough hewn stone which had served as altar, or a sacred tree whose branches bore the fleeces of sacrificed lambs, they stopped to pay their devotions, or if they were in haste, they kissed hands to it and muttered a prayer. Less patient minds, finding their gods of wood and stone deaf to their prayers, took refuge with astrologers and diviners, — a race who prosper in the midst of ruins; and men of visionary character, those who are carried away by religious excitements, followed after the strange Oriental rites which in these times deeply moved the human mind.

IV. — INVASION OF ORIENTAL CULTS.

MOREOVER, amid all its prosperity the age was suffering with the disease of a successful people who, set free from the anxiety of a struggle for existence, have full leisure for thinking, even of death. Those men of turbulent nature, born for action, who for centuries had acted with such terrible energy, were tired of resting, satiated with comfort, and being no longer in action, were giving themselves to thought. Long occupied by the exterior world, wherein the Greek and Roman genius had lived as worshippers of beauty, they now fell back upon themselves, and were troubled by questions with which the old races of Latium had never been

disquieted. Whence come we, whither are we going, and why do we exist? But humanity was not yet mature enough for the cold analysis of these formidable questions. It was not Reason, mistress of herself, putting them and striving to solve them. Remaining, in spite of many revolts, still under the domination of the religious sentiment, the human mind, vacillating and undecided, was groping after new gods. Men penetrated into vague regions, into visible darkness, searching after the supernatural. It was the beginning of the rupture with the ancient civilization. To the religions of light and joy the religion of the catacombs and of tears was about to succeed. By way of transition from the one to the other came the invasion of Oriental cults.

Historians long failed to take account of the transformations of religious thought in pagan society, and could see but one step from Homer's mythology to the Nicene Creed; so that the world seemed to have changed front by a sudden revolution. Important studies in the history of religious and philosophic doctrines have shown that after the great disturbances produced by the conquests of Alexander and of Rome new ideas were set in circulation in Asia, Egypt, and Greece, incessantly combining in different proportions, and ending by forming a current of idealism absolutely contrary to that which the Graeco-Latin civilization had produced. It was a new age of the world, of which the philosophers were the precursors; the end of the natural religions, and the beginning of the moral ones.

At all times it had been in the policy of Rome and in the character of its religion to give citizenship to the gods of the vanquished, even when the Senate refused as much to their worshippers. During the Empire the frequency and safety of communication facilitated this religious propagandism. Olympus was peopled with divinities unknown to Cato; thither the Emperors ascended, the genii seemed to descend thence, or to occupy the ways to it, and Rome, the religious capital of the world, as it was the political capital, was already styled "the *sacrosanct* city."¹

Men sought these new gods from the direction towards which the world then leaned. Commerce, arts, letters, philosophy, even

¹ *Civitas sacrosancta* (Apuleius, *Met.* xi. *ad fin.*).

the favorite language of the time, all had an Oriental turn. The religious spirit took that direction also, the Emperors themselves even encouraging it; Marcus Aurelius "filled Rome with foreign worships;"¹ Commodus, Elagabalus, Alexander Severus, hastened on the movement; in his book, *The Errors of Paganism*, written in Constantine's time, Firmicus Maternus seems to have forgotten the ancient religion of Rome, and speaks only of Isis, Cybele, the Heavenly Virgin,² and Mithra. The dead gods, in fact, did not come to life again, they left their empire to others.

But the spirit of the East is an ascetic or sensual mysticism; it is the religion born of enthusiasm, of ecstasy, and of faith, outside every rational conception. Greek thought, I dare not say Roman, plunged into it.³ At a time when on the banks of the Tiber the gods of the Capitol were still as much honored as ever, Greece had been long accustomed to attack her own divinities. But as she had preceded Rome in scepticism, so she had also preceded her in new paths of religion. All the Greek writers of the second century, Lucian excepted, are believers. A nearer neighbor to Asia, Greece had been the first to be touched by Asiatic influence, and it was by Greeks of Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt that the Oriental cults were spread throughout all the provinces of the Empire. The ancient gods were thereby for a moment brought to life again; oracles long silent again gave responses; the Delphian Pythia regained her voice, and Diocletian piously consulted the Didymæan Apollo. Sacerdotal honors were sought after, and the number of priests was increased greatly. In the album of the decurions of Canusium for the year 237 there is not found a single flamen's name; that of Thamugas, drawn up a century later, is full of them.

But with these Oriental religions came a train of incantations, expiatory purifications, and extravagant devotions, hitherto unknown in Greece and Rome. Noisy, theatrical, and taking pleasure in tragic emotions, they were destined to change the simple faith

¹ Capitolinus, *Marc.* 13. The rites of Cybele and of Mithra were practised from this time in the temple of Apollo on the Vatican, either on the spot or very near the place where now stands the church of St. Peter (Becker, i. 662, 663).

² The *Virgo*, or *Dea caelestis*, of Carthage was the Syrian Astarte (Münter, *Relig. der Karth.* p. 62, and Orelli, Nos. 1,942-1,944).

³ Pausanias, Dion, Maximus of Tyre, are religious minds, Aristeides a visionary, Aelian a fanatic. There is nothing like these among the literary Latins.

of the Western provinces.¹ Such were the cults of the solar divinities Adonis and Atys, whose death and resurrection, symbols of the renewal of the seasons, gave occasion for festivals in which the Oriental populations exhibited all forms of exaggerated grief and joy, — fasting, funereal lamentations, flagellation with a disciplinary scourge whose cords were armed with small bones; even blood, wounds, horrible mutilations, or joyous hymns, orgiastic dances, and obscene songs: such also were certain rites in the worship of Cybele and of Mithra, especially the taurobolium.

Prudentius describes² one of these sacrifices made to the Great Mother, Cybele. He shows us the crowd gathering from afar to the festival, for the man who gave it displayed all the magnificence which his fortune permitted, and the priests appeared in all their pomp. In the neighborhood of the temple a ditch was dug, and to the sound of sacred instruments the neophyte descended into it, richly attired and having fillets around his forehead and a gold wreath on his head. The ditch being then covered with perforated planks, a bull, with gilded horns and flanks half hidden by garlands of flowers, was then led on to the boards. The temple attendants made him fall on his knees, and a priest armed with the sacrificial knife opened a large wound, from whence the blood flowed in streams. The ditch was filled with the blood, and the neophyte, with extended arms and head thrown back, strove to prevent a drop of this blood from reaching the earth before having touched him. His ears, his eyes and mouth, and his whole body were soon covered with it. When he reappeared, streaming “with the vivifying rain,” instead of being an object of disgust and horror,³ he was regarded as a happy man, “regenerated for eternity.”⁴ And this rich man was envied for being

¹ From the reign of Augustus there were temples to Isis at Rome, outside the pomoerium (Dion, liii. 2). But this Egyptian divinity soon had imperial worshippers, — Otho (Suet., *Otho*, 12), Domitian, who built an *Iseum* and a *Serapeum* (Eutropius, vii. 23), Commodus, and others (Lamprid., *Comm.* 9). In the third century she had sanctuaries even in Germany (Orelli, No. 1,892).

² *Hymn*, x. vv. 1,021 et seq.

³ *Procedit inde . . . visu horridus* (Prudentius, *Hymn*, x. 1,045).

⁴ *Renatus in aeternum taurobolio* (Orelli, No. 2,352). Some devotees repeated this baptism monthly, or that of the *criobolium*, or sacrifice of a ram, which was less costly. See, in Firmicus Maternus (*De Errore prof. relig.* 28), a curious passage in which he contrasts the remission of sins obtained by the blood of Christ to the bloody baptism of the taurobolium. . . . *Pollux sanguis iste, non redimit.*

able to buy, by means of a hideous sacrifice, the repose of a guilty conscience and the favor of the gods, which could no longer be acquired by the offering of a pigeon, a few grains of incense, and an honest life.¹



THE TAUROBOLIUM.²

The priests of these religions were not like those of Rome, men employed to offer prayers in the temple for the republic,

¹ The *taurobolium* and the *criobolium* became frequent from the time of the Antonines; see Orelli, Nos. 2,322–2,355. The *taurobolium* was sometimes offered for the health or recovery from illness of an Emperor; thus, at Lyons for Marcus Aurelius (Orelli, No. 2,322), and at Narbonne, where the first personage of the province, the *augustal flamen*, performing the sacrifice “for the sake” of Septimius Severus, who was suffering much from gout, received in his stead the regenerative blood (Gruter, xxix. 12). The same was done also “for the preservation of the city” (Robert, in the *Comptes rendus de l’Acad. des inscr.*, 1872, p. 474). Purification by water was obligatory for all material impurities, such as touching a corpse, etc.

² Restoration taken from the memoir of M. de Boze on the inscription on the taurobolic altar found at Fourvières in December, 1704 (*Mém. de l’Acad. des inscr.* ii. 473 and pl. 16).

who on leaving the temple became again citizens and magistrates. Set apart for the service of the god or goddess, these Oriental priests formed a priestly body whose only professed care was of divine things, and they wore a particular dress, which the Church has imitated with the same happy facility which caused her to preserve, under Christian names, so many festivals, ceremonies, and pagan customs.¹ After the bloody baptism of the taurobolic sacrifice, the officiating priest became the spiritual father of the initiated, whom he marked on the forehead with a sign of consecration to the god.² In Egypt were already cloisters in which "the servants of Serapis"³ were secluded, and those of Mithra, Isis, and other divinities were united in religious brotherhoods in which they passed through different grades of initiation.⁴ The monastic life, as well as the eremitic, had begun in the wildernesses adjacent to the Jordan and the Nile: the Essenes, who led a communistic life and practised abstinence, did not permit women to approach their abodes; the Therapeutae lived in the desert, engaged in meditation, fasting, and prayer, in the midst of ecstatic visions.⁵

"It is the battle of Actium beginning again," says a philosopher, cursing the Oriental religions, with which he confounded Christianity. "The monsters from Egypt dare to hurl their darts against the gods of Rome; but they will not prevail."⁶ The government also grew anxious respecting these violent cults which disturbed men's

¹ The priests of Cybele wore the tiara, which has become the episcopal mitre. Plutarch speaks of the priests of Isis having *λωοστολῖαι καὶ ξύρησις* (*Isis and Osiris*, 3). This *ξύρησις* was the tonsure of the whole head (Artemidorus, *Oneirocr.* i. 23). The assistants were sprinkled with Nile water, considered as holy water (Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 25; Servius, *Ad Aen.* xi. 116). Apuleius says that at the end of each service in the worship of Isis, one of the priests mounted a pulpit at the temple door and said prayers for the Emperor and the Empire, after which he pronounced the sacred formula: "Let the people retire" (*Λαοῖς ἀφεςις*); and the crowd withdrew, kissing the feet of the statue of the goddess (*Met.* xi. *ad fin.* etc.). The Abbé Fleury has shown in his book on the *Mœurs des chrétiens* how many ancient customs have been preserved by the Church.

² See the end of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius: *Complexus sacerdotem meum jam parentem*, and Boissier, i. 398 *et seq.*

³ Cf. the papyri of the Serapeum of Memphis, interpreted by Hase and Peyron.

⁴ There were twelve of these, requiring laborious experiences, which lasted forty-five, fifty, and even eighty days, after which the initiated was baptized and marked on the forehead with a sign of consecration to Mithra, after which he made an oblation of bread and wine, accompanied by mysterious words, etc. Cf. Layard, *Recherches sur le culte de Mithra*.

⁵ On the Essenes and Therapeutics, see the curious details given by Philo and Josephus.

⁶ Maximus of Madaura (Saint Augustine, *Epist.* 43).

minds,¹ and on this account were so attractive to those whom the frigid severity of the ancient rites now left unmoved. These emotions, which the women sought from the new religions, were given them freely: frightful sights, sacred pomp, mysterious words, infinite promises, even rude penances, everything stirred these timid souls and secured them. See, in Juvenal,² how they flock to the Oriental superstitions, and how great is their docility. "She will break the ice and plunge into the river in the depth of winter, or dip three times in Tiber at early dawn and bathe her timid head in its very eddies, and thence emerging will crawl on lacerated knees over the whole field of Tarquinius Superbus. If white Io command she will go to the extremity of Egypt, and bring back water fetched from scorching Meroë to sprinkle on the temple of Isis, hard by the ancient sheepfold." Has she committed what the priest regards as an act of impiety, tears and certain murmured words bring her pardon from Osiris: after which she may begin again; for the remission of sin is promised, not to what Christians will call the "circumcision of the heart," but to the practice of certain religious exercises. Devotion takes all forms. We see rigors of piety which remind us of the *richis* of India or of certain monks of the Middle Ages,³ and convulsive dances like those of the spinning dervishes.

Other women consult the Jew, the Chaldaean, the Phrygian augur. It costs them somewhat, but they give freely to the priest, the temple, the idol, which they decorate in sumptuous dress; but if it do not hear their prayers, they will treat it as the Neapolitan *lazzarone* treats the saint with whom he is dissatisfied, loading it with insults and blows. Long before this time a character in Menander complained on the Athenian stage that the gods were ruining the husbands. "Our wives," says another, "need as many as five sacrifices a day."⁴

¹ See the severities enacted under article xxi. of book v. of the *Sententiae* of Paulus against the *vaticinatores qui humana credulitate publicos mores corrumpunt*, by whom . . . *populares animi turbantur*; and against those who *novos et usu vel ratione incognitas religiones inducunt ex quibus animi hominum moveantur*.

² Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 523-530.

³ . . . *Caeno contaminari, desiderare in sterquilinio . . . projicere se in faciem, turpiter sedere*, and the whole treatise by Plutarch *De Superstitione*.

⁴ Strabo, vii. 297.

For initiation into these mysteries, Mithra,¹ the mediator between the Supreme God and men, required a fast of fifty days, —



REMAINS OF THE THEATRE OF HERODES AT ATHENS.

longer than the Mohammedan Ramadan. — then eighteen days more devoted to trials or to different penances, and two to flagellations.

¹ Mithra signifies in Zend, "sun and love." It recalls *Eros*, or creative Love, and the *δημιουργός* of the theogony of Hesiod and Parmenides.

The priests of the Enyo of Comana, like the *aïssaoua* of Algeria, played with swords and gave themselves severe wounds; the Galli of Cybele emasculated themselves, as do at the present day the Russian *scoptzi*; and a multitude of vagabonds who called themselves priests of various divinities, but in fact followed callings of



MITHRA SACRIFICING THE BULL.¹

doubtful honesty, begged while they hawked prayers, talismans, philters, and in addition, like Tetzels band, indulgences for the remission of sins. Never did a gang of gypsies cause so much disgust as these priests of the Syrian goddess whose hideous picture Apuleius has left us.²

¹ Group in the Vatican. This sacrifice, made at the winter solstice, indicated the combat and victory of the god of day, the Sun, over the Bull, the symbol of the powers of night. The church of St. Clement at Rome is built on a sanctuary of Mithra. Cf. *C. I. L.* vol. vi. No. 3,725.

² *Met.* viii. *ad fin.* Plato had already brought to notice (*Rep.* ii. 7) the religious charlatans besieging the doors of the rich to sell them secrets thereby the latter could atone

There existed then what is often seen,—much outward show of religion, and little true devotion. Obedience to the prescription of a ritual, especially the performance of expiatory rites, which were the principal characteristic of the Oriental cults, was deemed sufficient for constraining the will of the gods, giving them satisfaction, and calming all remorse. The result was that religious practices did not always turn to the advantage of morals, because a religion which is confined to external observances, instead of reaching the heart, becomes perfectly reconciled with moral obliquity.¹

Yet a truly religious spirit found the means of moral improvement in becoming engrossed with divine things; and the extravagances of others no more turned such aside than our *fabliaux*, the fête of fools, that of the ass, and some strange sculpture in our churches turned aside, in the Middle Ages, the faithful from the lofty teaching of the Catholic Church. Persons of refinement kept away from the coarse and licentious rites of Dionysos and Aphrodite, of Sabazios and the Syrian goddess, to become initiated in mysteries in which the religious spirit had slowly purified the divine idea, by disengaging it from the ancient naturalistic conceptions. The priests revealed to them nothing more than was already known; but they had preserved a dramatic effect which struck the imagination and left a profound impression on the mind. See how grave Apuleius becomes after his initiation into the mysteries of Isis. “Prostrate before the goddess, with my face on her divine feet. I watered them for a long time with my tears; and interrupting my words by frequent sobs, I addressed this prayer to her:—

“Thou, O holy and perpetual¹ preserver of the human race, always munificent in cherishing mortals, dost bestow the sweet affection of a mother on the misfortunes of the wretched. Nor is there any day or night, nor so much as the minutest particle of time, which passes unattended by thy bounties. Thou dost protect

even for a crime committed by themselves or by their ancestors. They received, says Apuleius, some small pieces of money, a cruse of wine, some milk, cheese, and flour; and thus wandered about the country, plundering as they went . . . *ad istum modum palantes, omnem illam deprædabantur regionem.*

¹ See Lucian, *The Syrian Goddess*, and note the indications which M. Maury gives respecting prostitution being established in the temples, vol. iii. pp. 169, 176, etc.



ISIS SUCKLING HORUS (EGYPTIAN BRONZE OF THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD.
MUSEUM OF THE LOUVRE).



men both by sea and land, and, dispersing the storms of life, dost extend thy health-giving right hand, by which thou dost unravel the inextricably entangled threads of the Fates, and dost assuage the tempests of fortune and restrain the malignant influences of the stars. The gods of heaven adore thee, those in the shades below do homage unto thee; thou dost roll the sphere of the universe around the steady poles, thou dost illuminate the sun, thou dost govern the universe, thou dost tread the realms of Tartarus. The stars move responsive to thy command, the clouds are gathered, the seeds germinate, and the blossoms increase. The birds as they hover through the air, the wild beasts as they roam over the mountains, the serpents that hide in the earth, and the monsters that swim in the sea, are terrified at the majesty of thy presence. But I, so weak in capacity for celebrating thy praises, and possessing such slender means for offering sacrifices, have far from eloquence sufficient to express all that I conceive of thy majesty; not a thousand mouths, and tongues as many, not an eternal paean of unwearied speech, would be equal to the task. I will therefore use my utmost endeavors to do what, poor as I am, still one truly religious may do,—I will figure to myself thy holy countenance, and will ever preserve this most holy divinity locked up in the deepest recesses of my breast.”¹

We see what direction the religious sentiment was taking. Stimulated by the philosophers and at the same time by the priests of the new cults, who were impelling men by different roads towards a common end, it revived, manifesting itself in some by violent physical extravagances in devotion, in others by an ecstatic piety. For the ancient marvels, which were perishing, was substituted a new supernaturalism. The pure air of the Hellenic Olympus was growing thick with mists; the low and narrow, but honest and well-regulated heaven of the Latin divinities was becoming confused and disordered. The incongruity which Lucian describes in the assembly of the

¹ *Met. xi. ad fin.* Plutarch, at the beginning of his treatise, *On Isis and Osiris*, regards the goddess as the divine wisdom. She communicates her gifts to those who, by the control of their passions, by their assiduity in pious exercises and rigorous abstinences, aspire to the knowledge of the Supreme Being. The institution of mysteries which required purifications is carried as far back as Orpheus (Pausanias, ix. 30), by whose aid men believed sins were blotted out and sanctification attained. On the writings composed under the name of Orpheus, see Maury, *op. cit.*, chap. xviii., devoted to the *doctrines orphiques*.

gods, where Anubis, with the dog's head, sits beside the radiant Apollo, existed also in men's beliefs. It was the strangest medley of grotesque doctrines, rites, and practices, an anarchy amid which over-excited religious sensibility furnished visionaries, fanatics, and charlatans with the means of exercising their zeal or plying their trades. Apuleius very appropriately wrote at this time the sad and graceful myth of Psyche. Like the bride of Eros, pagan society, seized with impatient curiosity, desired to pierce the darkness which hid the divine spouse. An ardent inspiration carried many minds towards the unknown, and they asked the road to it from those who professed to lead men thither. The whole world, Pagans, Christians, and Jews, believed in magicians,¹ and the government, most credulous of all, had great fear of them. The law against them was extremely severe, condemning to the flames those who practised magic, and to the wild beasts those who studied it.² Its reputation was only the greater for this reason, and its lying mysteries added to the mental confusion of the time. Accordingly, prodigies were no less numerous than they had been in the palmiest days of Roman credulity. The most sceptical were not free from superstition. The elder Pliny, who does not believe in a God, although he believes in virtue, accepts omens and miracles, and relates them with perfect sincerity. It was still customary gravely to examine the entrails of victims offered in sacrifice. Men sought to find in dreams revelations of the future,³ and the Chaldaeans drew up "schemes of nativity," which sometimes became sentences of death, when they promised a lofty station to the contemporaries of Tiberius, Domitian, or Caracalla. The astrological predictions and the Sibylline verses assumed that Fate had determined everything

¹ See what Saint Irenaeus (*Adv. haer.* ii. 48) says of the *inspiratio daemoniaca*, and Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 2.

² Paulus, *Sent.* v. 23, 15-18.

³ Galen determined to study medicine in consequence of a dream of his father (*Meth. med.* ix. 49), and another dream prevented him from accompanying Marcus Aurelius in that Emperor's expedition to the Danube, — unless indeed this was a pretence to give himself an excuse for staying at Rome. In general, he believed in these things, as everybody did at the time, and had no doubt whatever as to the power of enchanter (Daremberg, *op. cit.* p. 23). Artemidorus of Ephesus, under the later Antonines, had written in five books an *ὄνειροκριτικόν*, or *Dream-Interpreter*. He believed that dreams revealed the future. Plato, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, thought the same, and all the Middle Ages believed as they, that in sleep man could enter into communion with the spirits of the dead. This is still the belief of the American Indians.

beforehand; the oracle, on the other hand, encouraged the idea that the gods freely interfered in mundane affairs. This inconsistency did not prevent men from having recourse one day to the Chaldaeans, and another to the oracle of Abonotichos, whose scandalous history Lucian has preserved for us.¹

The immutable laws of Nature pursued their course, and yet many believed that they saw miracles. As those most valued were miracles of healing, all interested persons multiplied and adorned the accounts which were in circulation in respect to these. And, in fact, some seemed to succeed. In the temples of Aesculapius the preparatory ceremonies, prolonged fasts, purifications, sacrifices, strange and sometimes efficacious remedies, and lastly the night passed in the midst of the sacred serpents, in presence of the god, who was sure to appear in the sick man's dreams, or to speak to him when half asleep, caused a salutary shock to the imagination.² Then faith and nervous excitement and some mysterious remedy assisting, there took place phenomena inexplicable to the science of those days, which were then of necessity attributed to divine action. "A man named Euphronios," says Aelian,³ "had allowed himself to adopt the follies of Epicurus, and had hence fallen into two great evils, — impiety and profligacy. Being attacked by a malady which the physicians could not cure, he was carried by his relatives into the temple of Aesculapius, where in the night, during sleep, he heard a voice saying: 'In the case of this man, there is only one means of restoration; namely, to burn the books of Epicurus, to knead these sacrilegious ashes with wax, and to cover the stomach and chest with the compound.'" The patient obeyed, and was at once cured and converted. Aelian gravely relates a number of other marvellous cures.⁴ The water of the

¹ *Alexander, or the False Prophet*; see also *The Liar*.

² A number of inscriptions bear: Made by the order of such or such a god (*ex praescripto, jussu, imperio*). See Orelli, Nos. 1,214, 1,445, 1,475, etc. On the *Astrology*, the consulting of the gods by means of *oracles* and *lots*, on *amulets*, *abracadabra*, *ἐφέσια γράμματα*, the evil eye, etc., see Marquardt, *Handb.* iv. 100–136.

³ Aelian, *Fragm.* 89. This Roman of Praeneste, who wrote only in Greek, and that, too, so well that he obtained the name of *μελίγλωττος*, had composed, besides his *Varia Historia* and his treatise *De Animalium Sollertia*, a book on *Providence*, and another on the *Manifestations of Divinity*, of which only some fragments remain.

⁴ See in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes a bold, untranslatable account of the cures effected in the Aesclepieion. Juba, king of Mauretania, relates that a plant was found in Arabia able to raise the dead (*Fragm. Hist. Graec.* iii. 479, fr. 57).

fountain of Aesculapius at Pergamus was a specific for many disorders, and many ex-votos hung up in the asclepieions — hands, arms, or legs of clay, as may be seen in certain of our churches those of wax, — and pieces of gold and silver thrown into the holy wells, bear witness to the miracles.¹ Inscriptions still preserve the grateful acknowledgments of those who, by the god's favor, had recovered health or sight. Accordingly, this helpful divinity had temples everywhere, — even in Paris, where now the Christian cathedral stands, — and seems to have taken in men's worship the place of Jupiter. Serapis at Alexandria was another great healing deity. All the divinities, even the heroes who had not been admitted to the highest honors of heaven, possessed this privilege, or rather had received it from their confiding worshippers.

On the other hand, the gods took vengeance by sending ruin, sickness, infirmities, or death on the sacrilegious. Isis made blind those who perjured themselves in her name, and Ovid saw at Tomi some of those unfortunate men wandering through the city confessing their faults and the just wrath of the goddess.²

The priests, who carefully maintained all this credulity, and often shared it, sometimes ascribed to themselves miraculous power. Some professed to drive away demons and deliver those possessed; others by secret charms healed the sick; it was even said that the priests of Serapis raised the dead.

The eighteenth century saw a mental state in some respects similar: the ancient faith growing weak, and under the very eyes of triumphant philosophers the miraculous cures wrought by the deacon Paris, the visions of the Illuminati, and the magnetic trough of Mesmer. In our own time, with all the testimony of science to the permanence of general laws, somnambulism, table-turning, spiritual

¹ *C. I. L.* vol. iii. No. 987; *C. I. G.* No. 5,980. See in the *Bulletin de la correspondance hellénique* the inventory of the Asclepieion of Athens by MM. Girard and Martha. Near Santa Maria de Capua there were found at the same time with the ruins of a temple to a Nurse Goddess, *κουροτρόφος*, nearly thirty thousand ex-votos in terra-cotta. There was a manufactory at the gates of the temple, where devotees procured at low prices arms, heads, legs, etc. (*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions*, etc., 1879, p. 304). Aelian (*De Anim. Natura*, 49) calls Aesculapius *νόσων ἀντίπαλον*; elsewhere he thus invokes him: *ὦ βασιλεῦ καὶ θεῶν φιλανθρωπότατε Ἀσκληπιέ*. The same title appears in an inscription of Thasos (Miller, *Mél. de philol.* i. 36). Cf. Aristides, *Orat. sacræ*, i. and ii., and *Orat. in Aescul.* [A large number of inscriptions on cures by Aesculapius have also been found in the recent excavations at Epidaurus. — ED.]

² *Pont.* i. 53 Cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* xiii. 92.

manifestations, spirit-rapping, and the wonderful water of La Salette, have found countless disciples. A work with the title, "Concerning Errors and the Truth," was praised in the hearing of Voltaire. "If it is a good book," he replied, "it needs fifty folio volumes for part one, and a half page for the second part." We are extending the half page, but slowly!

V. — EFFORTS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS TO SATISFY THE RELIGIOUS FEELING.

THE time had not yet come when man would recognize that to understand the twofold mystery of the divine essence and of creation is as much beyond his comprehension as it is beyond his power to fly through the air or to swim in the depths of the sea. The philosophers, therefore, did not renounce the idea of lifting the world out of the intellectual anarchy in which it was so grievously struggling, and they expected to succeed, some by giving up those gods "who governed so ill;" others by constructing a theodicy acceptable to minds which had not yet been affected by the intoxication of mysticism.¹ We are acquainted with the former; let us see how the latter strove to establish and extend the belief in the divine unity and the immortality of the soul, in the punishments and rewards of another life, and in relations with the Divinity in this life by the mediation of Genii.

The monotheism, vaguely perceived by primitive peoples, which underlies the Vedas as it underlies Hellenism, and which the Semitic peoples had naturally preserved in their double desert of sky and land in Arabia, had been in India and Greece covered up and hidden under the rich drapery which the poets had drawn across the door of the sanctuary. Anaxagoras rediscovered it in Athens, Cicero at Rome. An interpreter of the purest speculations of the Greek mind, Cicero had reached the idea of the divine unity and

¹ Epictetus (*Convers.* i. 12) lays down that there are, as regards the gods, five theories: 1. They do not exist. 2. They exist, but are perfectly indifferent to everything. 3. Their providence extends only to heavenly things. 4. They are engaged both with heaven and earth, but only in a general manner. 5. Man does not make a movement without their notice. This last is the theory which he himself adopts.

the immortality of the soul, not by the rigorous deductions of the philosopher who constructs a system where all is logically bound together, but by a noble impulse of the heart. The Stoics had replaced the incomprehensible God of Plato, the solitary God of Aristotle, by a living God who penetrates and fills the universe with his own life,¹ and they delighted to repeat the grand verses² in which Cleanthes expresses such an ardent faith in the Eternal Reason. But their Soul of the world, not being distinguished from the material universe, was but a force, and their Providence, the necessary chain of causes and effects, was only Destiny. Now, loving hearts asked for a more personal God, less inaccessible to the imagination and to prayer; and many began to find Him. What influence was exercised by the Jewish idea of that Jehovah who would not permit a rival? We cannot say; the Jews made their way everywhere; the "proselytes of the gate" whom they had converted must have helped on the development begun within paganism by the Platonic doctrines, which led polytheism to deism. We cannot wonder that the Jew Philo, who is so thoroughly Greek while still so Oriental, should separate God from the world, "as the artist is distinct from his work;" but a true pagan, Plutarch, reached the same truth. Plutarch was at that time the most illustrious representative of the Academy. He had recognized the two currents which were sweeping men away,—on the one hand to atheism, on the other, to superstition.³ He placed himself between the lowly and the proud, tried to raise the former from their cowardly abasement, and to bring back the latter to the conception of the good and just God of the *Timæus* of Plato: the one God, unchangeable, the Creator of the worlds which He has organized, and now preserves, presiding from the highest heavens over their courses. "Jupiter," he says, "was not brought up in the odoriferous caves of Crete, and Saturn did not devour a stone in the stead of his son. The principle and cause of his own eternal existence, he was from the beginning, and he will always be. Nothing escapes his notice, neither the summits of the mountains, nor the sources of the rivers, nor the cities, nor the sands of the seas, nor the countless stars. He has given us all that we possess; in him are the

¹ Vacherot, *Hist. de l'école d'Alex.* i. 93.

² The *Hymn of Jupiter*.

³ Gréard, *Morale de Plutarque*.

beginning and the end, the measure and destiny of everything. . . . Men's souls, encompassed here with bodies and passions, have no communication with God except what they can reach to in conception only, by means of philosophy as by a kind of obscure dream."¹ We see ourselves already on the road which leads to mystic contemplation and to ecstasy; and Numenius falls into them.²

At the entrance of the sanctuary Plato had written: "It is difficult to discover the Author and Father of the world, and when He has been found, it is impossible to make Him known to men." In spite of this hopelessness, the doctrine of the divine unity spread by degrees outside the sanctuary. We see it dawning at Rome in the last days of the Republic; under the Empire it made much way in men's minds. The nations came to it as well as the philosophers, for the unity of the divine principle was at the foundation of the Oriental religions which were gaining such ascendancy. The Isis of Apuleius³ is the supreme divinity, adored under numerous names: *Isis myrionyma*; ⁴ the Serapis of Severus and Caracalla,⁵ the Sun-God of Elagabalus and Aurelian, the Good, the Merciful One of the Palmyreans, the Ahoura-Mazda of the Persians, especially Mithra, "the invincible sun," which is everywhere adored, are, each for his own followers, "the Lord of the world blessed forever more." Maximus of Madaura echoes the feelings of many pagan souls when he writes in his beautiful letter to Saint Augustine: "What a fool, and utterly deprived of reason, is the man who does not regard as absolutely certain the existence of only one God, who, without beginning and without having begotten any like himself, is yet father of all the great things of the universe!"⁶

The Roman reckoned with his gods. He rendered them wor-

¹ *Isis and Osiris*, 79.

² This Numenius lived in the time of the Antonines; his works are known to us only by some curious fragments which Christian authors have preserved. See Vacherot, *op. cit.* i. 324.

³ See above, p. 396.

⁴ Orelli, Nos. 1,876, 1,877. An inscription at Capua (Mommsen, *Inscr. Neap.* No. 3,580) says: *Una quae es omnia dea Isis*. This was also said in respect to Atys, Serapis, and Mithra.

⁵ Serapis was confounded with the Sun. A procurator of Egypt had offered for the prosperity of Trajan an altar to the Sun-Jupiter, Grand Serapis; Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, i. 106, 153, 206, etc. The colossus of Nero had been consecrated by Hadrian to the Sun (*Had.* 18).

⁶ *Equidem unum esse Deum summum sine initio, sine prole naturae, ceu patrem magnum*

ship on the condition of their rendering him services. Towards them he felt respect and fear, but no love.¹ But humanity gathers up, along the route of its slow intellectual and moral evolution, ideas and sentiments which it did not at first hold, or held only obscurely. Respect, fear, self-interest do not compose true religious feeling. Certain souls separated from the earth by suffering or by meditation require the mysterious pleasure which man experiences in drawing near in worship to the Omnipotent, and the pride which this communion with God imparts. This divine love the Romans are about to know; by this too they approach Christianity, which has made of this feeling the pledge of faith, the guaranty of salvation. A positive thinker, a scientist, the physician Galen says: "Why dispute with those who blaspheme? It would be to profane the sacred language which ought to be kept for the Creator's praises. True piety does not consist in sacrificing hundreds of victims and offering him delicious perfumes, but in acknowledging and proclaiming his wisdom, power, and goodness. . . . He has proved his goodness by the benefits with which he loads his creatures, his wisdom by the order which he has placed in all things to make them subsist, his power in creating everything in perfect conformity to its end. Let us then raise our hymns and songs in honor of the Lord of the Universe."²

This God Epictetus wished men to love and unceasingly to praise for his benefits: "Since you are blind, you, the great mass, each one of you ought to repeat for the rest the hymn to the divine. If I were a nightingale I should sing; as a man, I praise God. This is my employ, and this will I accomplish so far as

atque magnificum, quis tam demens, tam mente captus, neget esse certissimum? (Saint Augustine, *Epist.* 46.) Horace had said in the time of Augustus: "Jupiter has neither second nor his like," —

. . . *Nil majus generatur ipso,
Nec viget quidquam simile aut secundum.*
(*Carm.* I. xii. 17-18.)

¹ I have several times pointed out in the first volume of this work that the ancient religion of the Romans was a contract between the gods and their worshippers. In the time of the Second Punic War, Rome promised sacrifices and games to the gods on condition that they should give her the victory, but not otherwise. Divine love came in later with philosophy; there is a little in Cicero, much in Seneca, still more in Epictetus. M. Havet, in his learned book on the *Origines du christianisme* (vol. ii. pp. 22, 132, and 275), concedes the *caritas deorum* to the pagans. The chronological distinction which I have just made, puts us, I think, in agreement.

² *De Usu partium*, iii. 10; Kühn, ii. 237

I can. Say with me, God is great." It is the spirit of our Psalms, *Laudate Dominum*.¹

Here we have pagans arriving at the idea of the divine unity, of Providence, and the adoration due to the Supreme Being. But how did they reconcile this idea with their paganism? Very easily. Seneca had said: "The Stoics represent the several functions of the Almighty Power under several appellations. When they speak of him as the Father and the Fountain of all beings, they call him Bacchus; and under the name of Hercules they denote him to be indefatigable and invincible; and in the contemplation of him in the reason, order, proportion, and wisdom of his proceedings they call him Mercury."² And three centuries later Maximus of Madaura repeats that the secondary divinities are only the attributes of the Supreme God spread abroad through the earth and honored under different names, because we are ignorant of the actual name of the only God. In addressing prayers to them it is He whom we adore.



PALLAS.³

One of these divine virtues assumed from day to day a more elevated character. Minerva, who in the ancient naturalism had represented air and water, pure and subtile matter, had afterwards personified intelligence. "After Jupiter," says Horace, "Pallas has the highest honors."⁴ For the poet, Olympus is still a court where the goddess sits by the side of the sovereign. Philosophers going

¹ Psalm cxii. and cxvi. It is the spirit of Epictetus, not the form; for the *Meditation*, i. 16, is a disjointed note, where I have been obliged to make some transpositions. The *Preface* chanted at all masses says also: . . . *hymnum tuæ gloriæ canimus*.

² *De Benef.* 12.

³ Marble bust, with the eyes of enamel. It was found at Tor Paterno (Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti, No. 197).

⁴ *Proximos illi (Jovi) . . . occupabit
Pallas honores.*

(*Carm.* I. xii. 19-20.)

farther into spirituality made of her the thought of the only God. The heavenly virgin, born of Jupiter, became the spotless



MINERVA ARMED.³

Wisdom, the Word of the Lord of the universe. Saint Justin wonders; “for,” he says, “the Word cannot be a woman.”¹ But the rhetorician Aristeides, his contemporary, explains without much difficulty the profound myth in which the λόγος θεῖος of Plato was hidden under the legend.² “Jupiter, withdrawing into himself, conceived the goddess in himself, and begat her of his own substance. She is truly his daughter, of an origin absolutely identical. Never leaving her father, she lives in him and with him, as if consubstantial with him. . . . As the sun appears with all his rays, so Minerva came forth from the paternal head fully equipped with her gifts. In the assembly of the gods her place is next to Jupiter. On every subject their will is always the same. It may be concluded from this that Minerva is the form of Jupiter, since whatever Jupiter does, Minerva does it with⁴ him. So one may attribute

to her all the works of her father.”⁴ In the Alexandrine period Isis held the same position towards Ammon. She was wisdom,

¹ *Quod quidem perridiculum nobis videtur* (Saint Justin, *Apol.* i. 64).

² According to Plato, the One has begotten the Intelligence (Vacherot, *Hist. de l'école d'Alex.* i. 305).

³ Statue called Minerva Poliades, found in the sixteenth century on the Esquiline, near the temple of Minerva Medica (Vatican; Braccio Nuovo, No. 114).

⁴ Ἀεὶ πάρεστί τε καὶ συνδιαίτῃται, καθάπερ συμπεφυκνῖα . . . κοσμηθεῖσα (Aristeides, in the discourse entitled Ἀθηνᾶ, pp. 10 and 16, edition of Canterius. Born about 117, he wrote in 175 his *Sacred Discourses*. Waddington, *Chronol. de la Vie d'Aristide*, in the *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.* 1867, p. 203).

justice, the soul of the Supreme Being, the mediator between the world and him.¹

Philo, whose influence was so considerable on the school of Alexandria and even on certain Fathers of the Church, had developed, since the time of Augustus and Tiberius, the theory of the triune God whom Egypt, Chaldaea, Persia, India, Pelasgic Greece, and Gaul had adored. From the Infinite Soul hidden in the impenetrable depths of his essence, had come forth by a first emanation "the eldest son of God and the most ancient of the angels," whom Philo also calls "the divine man," because man on the earth had been created in his image.

AMMON.²

This first-born of God, creator of the universe, is the Interior Word, or the Divine Wisdom which governs the world. In its turn it begat the Word Expressed, or Speech, the spirit which vivifies beings by his grace, "the heavenly Virgin acting as mediatrix between God who offers, and the soul which receives." This Platonist Jew, who thus revives one of the oldest beliefs of the Aryan race, is very far from the Jehovah of Moses; but still he is preparing an alliance between the men of the ancient law and those of the new.³ Numenius — who said concerning this great Alexandrine Jew, "Is it Philo who platonizes, or Plato who philonizes?" — admitted an analogous trinity, formed by emanation from the supreme God.⁴

The God of the Stoics, lost in the bosom of the universe, was therefore becoming the personal God, uncreate, eternal, who has produced all things and who governs creation by His Word, as Caesar

¹ *Isis and Osiris*, 2. Cf. Maury, *op. cit.* ii. 280.

² A marble Hermes found at Herculaneum (Museum of Naples, No. 114).

³ Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Logos exists already in *Ecclesiastes*, and in some of the Apocryphal books, whence Saint John borrowed it, and raised it to great importance.

⁴ Cf. Ritter, *Hist. de la philosophie*, iv. 427.

governs the Empire by his wisdom.¹ One God, one earthly sovereign: the two beliefs attracted one another; later it was said: One law, one king.

This conception, found at Alexandria at the beginning of the Christian era, which is published, with variations not now to be noticed, by Plutarch under the Flavians, Aristeides under the Antonines, Maximus of Madaura under Theodosius, and the Platonists in all periods, continues therefore through the four first centuries of the Empire. It may be reduced to these terms, which formed the basis of the theological teaching in the school of Plato, — God, incomprehensible to us in His essence, manifests Himself in the external world by the harmony of creation; in the heart of man, by conscience; in the world of ideas, by the Word, the archetype of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, the Eternal Truth which enlightens men, the Divine Mediator between the human race and God. In a word, two grand conceptions arose above the confused beliefs, — that of a first principle, the only God, and that of the λόγος, at once the providence of God and the light of men's minds.² These ideas took such a hold that Saint Justin considered the pagan philosophy as an unconscious and feeble reflection of the Divine Word, of which Christ was the brilliant and complete revelation.³ Under the Christian form of three hypostases of one and the same supreme nature, — the Father, or the divine essence; the Son, or His creative intelligence; the Spirit, or His vivifying power, — the belief in one God and in His Word was soon to exercise an extensive sway.

This omnipotent God, Father of men, owes them justice. To show that this justice was done them it became necessary to admit another dogma, that of the immortality of the soul. In the Greece of Homer and in the Palestine of ancient times this belief was obscure. The Greek and Roman dead in the Elysian Fields had a less

¹ Quintilian (*Inst. orat.* v. 10) comes near propounding as a necessary conclusion, that since there was a universal providence, there ought to be only one head to the Empire.

² Lactantius (*Instit. div.* iv. 9) says: "The λόγος of the Greeks *est et vox et sapientia Dei*;" and he adds: "Zeno calls λόγος the *rerum naturae dispositorem atque opificem*." On the λόγος of the Platonists and Alexandrines, cf. Villosion, *Theologia physica stoïcor.* p. 443, joined to the edition of Cornutus.

³ It was believed by many that in the general plan of education which God had prepared for the human race there had been, as it were, three successive revelations, — by the Old Testament given to the Jews, by the philosophy of the Greeks, and by the New Testament of the Christians. This was an attempt at conciliation made by honest minds, but an impracticable one.

vague existence than the *rephaim* of the Jews in their *sheol*.¹ This shadow of life was but a miserable recompense; and yet certain philosophers of the last days of Greece believed that even this was to grant too much to human nature. The Epicureans — in whose opinion the gods were only phantoms which men should banish from their minds — naturally ended our existence with this world. The Cynics thought the same. “Is the soul immortal?” Demonax was asked. “Yes,” he replied, “like everything else;” and we have read his definition of the free man: “He who fears nothing and hopes for nothing.” The elder Pliny did not believe in another life,² and his nephew makes immortality to consist in living in men’s memory.³ The Peripatetics were of the same opinion. The man who in the third century was called the second Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, maintained that his master did not think differently. A number of Stoics held the same doctrine, after the example of Zeno, and the most perfect of them, Marcus Aurelius, was not sure whether all did not end with death.⁴ Galen, who speaks so much of the only God, remained undecided on the question of immortality, — “a knowledge,” said he, “not absolutely necessary for the acquisition of health or virtue.” Tacitus also would like to believe, with the author of the *Somnium Scipionis*, “that there is a place reserved for virtuous men, and that great souls are not extinct with the body;” yet for the final farewell he could find these words only: “Repose in peace,” which do not express, like the *Requiescat in pace* of Christians, a rest awaiting the resurrection.⁵

One can never be sure of grasping the fluctuating thought of Seneca; he says indeed: “Will you forbid me from seeking to penetrate the secrets of heaven? Do you wish me to have my head

¹ The *rephaim* are not in *sheol* condemned to eternal sleep, as the story of the Witch of Endor evidences; but the doctrine of rewards and penalties is not to be found in *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Leviticus*, *Deuteronomy*, or *Job*. Situated between Egypt and Persia, — that is to say, between the two countries which professed the most energetic belief in a life to come, — Judaea at last ended the uncertainty of its patriarchs on this question, and added to the great principle of the divine unity that of the resurrection and judgment of the dead. It was after the Captivity, especially in the time of the Maccabees, that this belief became popular among a part of the Jewish people.

² *Hist. nat* vii. 56.

³ *Epist.* ii. *ad fin.* [Just like the modern Comtists. — Ed.]

⁴ The Stoic school nevertheless believed in a temporary immortality, till the destruction of the world by fire, when all would end.

⁵ Tac., *Agric.* 46.

always bent towards the ground? I belong to too good a place, and am born for grander things.”¹ Then, rising on Plato’s wings, he sees the souls of the just sojourning for a time above our heads, to be purified from all stain, then shooting into the ethereal sphere and mingling with the sacred multitude of the blessed, who draw all knowledge from the source of Truth.² Unfortunately, he has just said in the same treatise: “Be well persuaded that the dead suffer no pain. That hell which is depicted as so terrible, is but an invention of the poets. Death is deliverance; it restores us to the tranquil sleep which we were enjoying before birth.”³

These ideas were more widely diffused than is generally believed. “You know,” says Plutarch to his wife, “that there are those who persuade the multitude that the soul when once freed from the body suffers no inconvenience nor evil, nor is sensible at all.”⁴ Some inscriptions speak of it as an eternal repose, an eternal security.⁵ “Once, I was not; to-day, I am no longer: but I know nothing about it, and little do I care.”⁶

Here is an inscription, doubtless from the tomb of a scholar: “In Hades there is neither bark, nor Charon, nor Aeacus, nor the gate-keeper Cerberus. All we whom death sends thither are only bones and ashes.”⁷ Others recall the pleasures of life and advise their enjoyment: “You who are still living, eat, drink, amuse yourselves, then come hither;”⁸ “where,” says another, “there is neither laughter nor joy.”⁹ “So far as I have lived, I have lived; what I have drunk and eaten, that alone is now with me.”¹⁰ This is the inscription of a mercenary soldier; the one that Pope

¹ *Epist.* 65.

² *Ad Marc.* 25.

³ *Ibid.* 19, and *Epist.* 24: *Mors nos consumit . . . Consumptis nil restat.*

⁴ *Consol. ad uxor.* 10: . . . *Nullum malum, nullum incommodum esse iis qui soluti sunt corpore.*

⁵ *Quies aeterna.* Cf. Or-Henzen, Nos. 1,192, 4,428, 4,849, and the chapter on the *Sententiae sepulcrales*, passim. L. Renier, *Inscr. d’Alg.* Nos. 946, 947, 1,546, 1,755, etc.

⁶ Orelli, No. 4,809.

⁷ *C. I. G.* No. 6,298. The scoffs of the educated class had not killed old Charon, for he still lived in the popular beliefs of modern Greece, where the practice of putting between the teeth of the departed the coin required by the fatal ferryman was perpetuated down quite to the Middle Ages (Friedländer, *op. cit.* iii. 632). The deceased was also offered some *kollyra*, or cakes of boiled corn, raisins, almonds, and pomegranate seeds (A. Dumont, *Mém. sur les bas-reliefs représentant le banquet funèbre*).

⁸ *C. I. L.* vol. ii. No. 1,434.

⁹ Marini, *Inscr. Alb.* p. 117, 3.

¹⁰ Henzen, No. 7,407.

Urban VIII. caused to be shattered was still more ignoble.¹ Certain pagans had no more modesty in death than in life; and there are always unclean souls who, when religious faith has gone, are left a prey to the basest instincts.

Yet much greater was the number of minds to whom an empty heaven and the nature-god were not sufficient. On a funeral pillar are represented Aedipus and the Sphinx, — Life questioning Death. But Death never reveals the secret; and in presence of that Nothing which some accepted, others were driven even to renounce life. “To die,” they said, quoting Heraclitus, “to die is to wake.”

Two schools offered a refuge to the spiritually minded, — Pythagorism, with its grand doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and, as the inference from it, successive trials and purifications; Platonism, with its hopes of immortality, vaguely held by the master, but now stated positively and in definite form by the disciples. Both were destined to be united in the school of Alexandria, which sought to give new life to polytheism, on the one hand explaining it by means of allegories and metaphysics; on the other, bringing together, by a powerful effort of eclecticism, the religious traditions of all peoples, under the control of philosophy: subtle distinctions, ingenious interpretations, forced agreements, useful for refined minds, incomprehensible to the masses, and consequently of no influence upon them. But this school only began about 193 with Ammonius Saccas; its history belongs, therefore, to the subsequent period.

Plutarch, who starts especially from Plato, made a vigorous effort to defend the dogma of the one God, of His providence, and of the immortality of the soul. To the Epicureans, who, in order to deliver man from the terrors of hell, deprived him of the hope of eternity, the Chaeronean sage replied: “Very amiable things must those be that come to us from the gods; but those that are persuaded otherwise, obstruct the very sweetest part of their prosperity, and leave themselves nothing to turn to in their adversity, but when they are in distress, look only to this one refuge and port. — dissolution and insensibility: just as if in a storm or tempest at sea, some one should, to hearten the rest, stand up and say to

¹ *Ibid.*, No. 7,410.

them: Gentlemen, the ship hath never a pilot in it, nor will Castor and Pollux come themselves to assuage the violence of the beating waves or to lay the swift careers of the winds; yet I can assure you there is nothing at all to be dreaded in all this, for the vessel will be immediately swallowed up by the sea, or else will very quickly fall off and be dashed in pieces against the rocks." Another Platonist, Maximus of Tyre, wrote: "Neither is the decay of the body unpleasing to the generous soul, but as a man in chains, while he sees the wall of his prison decaying and crumbling, he waits for liberation from his bonds that he may survey the ethereal regions and be filled with splendid light."¹

Loving hearts had not waited for philosophers to teach them to doubt annihilation. The following words, taken from inscriptions, convey at the same time resignation and hope: "Pluto is not so malicious."² "When thou diest, thou art not dead," says another, unfortunately much corroded.³ "No," writes a father on his son's tomb, who died in Numidia, "no, thou dost not descend to stay with the Manes, thou risest towards the stars of heaven."⁴ At the other end of the Roman world⁵ a mother carves on the sepulchral stone of her child: "We are afflicted by a cruel wound; but thou, renewed in thy existence, livest in the Elysian Fields. The gods order that he who has deserved the light of day should return under another form; this is a reward which thy goodness has gained thee. Now, in a flowery mead, the blessed, marked with the sacred seal, admit thee to the flock of Bacchus, where the Naiades, who bear the sacred baskets, claim thee as their companion in leading the solemn processions by the light of the torches."⁶

¹ *Diss.* xli. Plato had already said: "The soul is an immortal existence, inclosed in a perishable prison; death is a sort of resurrection. So the soul of the dying sage is open to the sublimest truths."

² *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des inscr.*, 1862, p. 174.

³ Miller, *Mél. de philol.* i. 37.

⁴ L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 3,421.

⁵ At Doxato, near Philippi, in Macedonia (Heuzey, *Mission de Macédoine*, p. 129).

⁶ The study of monumental figures has brought M. Ravaisson to the same conclusions as those gained from the study of written monuments. "With the passage of time the figures by which belief in another life manifested itself, vague and confused at first, instead of disappearing, become more definite and positive. Ideas regarding the destiny of souls grow more and more noble; increasing honors are paid the dead. In addition, these ideas and practices extend by degrees to a larger number. At the beginning, it seems as if men concerned themselves only about the fate of kings and heroes, children or direct descendants of the gods; but in time many others obtain a share in these solitudes, and finally all, or nearly all.

The development of this idea may be followed in the successive transformations of a charming myth, that of Psyche, the human soul, which, purified by love and grief, becomes immortal.

Philosophy and many minds were then in possession of this twofold idea,—the divine unity and the future life, or the resurrection. Men could therefore resume with more force the question of rewards and punishments, and arrive at a clearer conception of the future life. Plutarch devotes to it two treatises, those concerning *Superstition*, and the *Delays of Divine Justice*, which are counted among his best works.¹ One expression in the latter treatise sums up his belief of the part played by Providence: “Man is but shut up in this life, like a close prisoner in a jail, whence it is impossible to make an escape.”

BACCHUS.²

Sooner or later, on earth or in the next world, in his own person or in his descendants, he receives his punishment.

The pagans did not recognize, any more than did the early Christians, the purely spiritual nature of the soul.³ The shades of the dead, formed of a subtile, imperceptible matter, still experienced the wants of humanity, its pleasures and its pains. They were hungry and thirsty: hence the libations and offerings made at their tombs; the funeral repasts which were celebrated there,—a kind of communion with the dead man;⁴ the objects which he had loved placed near

‘Happiness is reserved for those who resemble the gods;’ that is an ancient maxim which nothing can change. In time, the conception of this resemblance to the gods, or of perfection, which means the same thing, becomes such that all men may aspire to it” (Ravaisson, *Le Monument de Myrrhine et les bas-reliefs funéraires*, 1879).

¹ See in Gréard, *Morale de Plut.* pp. 265–294, an analysis of these two treatises, and the commentary upon them.

² Marble bust in the Museum of Naples.

³ Tertullian, *De Anima*, 5: . . . *Animam nihil esse, si corpus non sit*. Saint Basil, Saint Athanasius, Saint Jerome, sometimes even Saint Augustine, have had this material conception of the soul.

⁴ *De Superst.* 4.

him; even the sacrifices of living creatures, as a horse, a slave, to serve the master in another existence. Achilles sacrifices captives to furnish Patroclus with a guard of honor in the Elysian Fields, as the warrior of the prairies is buried with his arms and his horse. Corresponding to the world of realities was another world, quite as real for the pagan, of spectres and phantoms, benevolent or hostile.

These shades could also experience moral pleasures and suffer physical pains, since the belief in another life led those who accepted it to admit the idea of rewards and punishments. The popular imagination, so rich as regards the torments of hell, has always been very meagre in respect to the delights of Elysium. The "blessed ones" of Homer and Vergil have a very dull existence. "Do not console me about death," says Achilles to Ulysses; "I had rather till the ground as a hired laborer than reign here over all the shades." The common crowd of the dead had a low grade of joys, showing the effects of pagan sensuality. As for the damned, invention had been more successful; but how far Plutarch in his description of hell falls below the terrible grandeur of the Florentine poet!¹ From the fact of living, human nature has learned more tortures, and its poets have been able to vary the punishments of the lost. In spite of this relative scantiness, the old myth of the vengeful Furies caused many believers to tremble, and however incomplete this moral sanction might be, a sanction it was.

Not every sinner fell into their formidable hands. Below the upper region, where virtuous souls lived in eternal serenity, and yet above the abyss which echoed with the cries of anguish of the damned, a perpetual whirlwind drove hither and thither those souls whose crimes were not inextinguishable. The abyss itself had three circles, three degrees of punishment: going on from the milder, to the more terrible. Over the first presided *Poena*, or Chastisement; over the second, *Diké*, or Justice; over the third, *Erinys*, or Vengeance.

This page of the treatise, *Delays in the Justice of God*,² brings to mind the *Divina Commedia* of Dante and the purgatory of the

¹ *De Genio Soer.* 22. Cf. in Plato (*Rep.* x. *ad fin.*) the relation by Er the Armenian of what he saw in Hades. Cicero (*Scipio's Dream*), Vergil (*Aeneid*, vi.), Plutarch (the *Daemon of Socrates* and the *Delays of Divine Justice*), have also attempted to reveal to us the mystery of the other life.

² Sect. 22.

Roman Catholic Church. The most popular of Roman poets, Vergil, had a similar notion. "Some souls," he says,¹ "are incessantly beaten by winds, others are purified by fire. After a thousand years they are freed from the pollution of earth, but it is to be clothed in new bodies." The resemblance goes no farther. For the Christian the other life is the true life; in the case of the pagan, this one is the most certain, and, to most minds, the best. Accordingly, many looked forward with terror to the approach of that moment when remorse should seize them.² By initiation into the mysteries, they attempted to reach a state of grace, and by purifications and prayers to escape the expiations of the other world.



YOUNG HER-
CULES.³

It does not appertain to the historian to say what of scientific exactness is lacking in all these philosophies, but it is his duty to inquire what their influence has been on society. The world is not governed by logic, and noble words, tending to awaken in the depth of the heart the feelings therein hidden, have more effect than the best-constructed syllogisms: witness Seneca and Plutarch, who, though by no means great philosophers, have nevertheless exercised a powerful influence upon general education. Now the inscriptions and figures on tombs, the favorite mythological representations, — Proserpine restored to the light of day, Alcestis awaiting her spouse, Hercules triumphing over death, and the joyous scenes or the tranquil happiness of life in Elysium, — which so many funereal bas-reliefs reproduced,⁴ testify to the anticipation of another existence.

This belief entailed that of constant communications between the world of the living and that of the dead. In the twilight or in sleep, especially at night or in the shades of the forest, men believed that they beheld the spirits of those whom they had loved, spectres, *larvae* or *lemures*, whose influence was feared, and the troubled souls of those who, having died a violent death, had not

¹ *Aeneid*, vi.

² . . . *Peccatorum suorum tum maxime poenitet* (Cic., *De Div.* i. 30). M. Boissier (*La Religion romaine*, i. 345) remarks that this expression of Cicero seems quite Christian.

³ Silver coin of Rhodes.

⁴ M. Ravaisson has pointed out, in the memoir cited above, that the scenes of farewell represented on so many bas-reliefs and funerary vases were often scenes of reunion in Elysium.

been able to find a tomb. In this other existence they seemed to have acquired a formidable or beneficent power; accordingly, to appease the Manes, three festivals were celebrated yearly, — on the 24th of August, 5th of October, and 8th of November, — when the



THE PARTING OF ADMETUS AND ALCESTIS.¹

mundus, a deep ditch set apart to the infernal-divinities, was opened, from which came forth at that time the troop “of silent spirits.”² Dion Cassius, Philostratus, Pausanias, saw spectres everywhere, and the younger Pliny believed in apparitions.³

¹ Etruscan amphora of the Luynes collection, in the *Cabinet de France*. Alcestis throws her arms round the neck of Admetus. Behind the king a winged Genius holds a serpent in each hand. Behind the Genius is the entrance to Hell. On the left of Alcestis, Charon holds up a heavy mallet.

² Preller, *Röm. Mythologie*, 456.

³ *Epist.* vii. 27.

The ancients desired to question these dead men, — amid whom they lived, since the tombs were placed at the entrance of the cities and along the great public roads, — these genii who unceasingly went and came, invisible but close at hand, and thus to penetrate the future. Hence the invocations, the charms, the magical sacrifices, — which were sometimes abominable crimes, as the murder of children, of which several Emperors were guilty,¹ and of which the Christians were falsely accused. The romance of Apuleius, which represents in action the black art of the sorcerers of Thessaly, shows how much the men of those days were occupied with the mysteries of the grave and the world of spirits.

We must not expect to find in this belief a distinct dogma, although it dates from a very early period, being taught by Plato² and Pythagoras; and it can be traced even farther back. The repugnance to annihilation, and the need of explaining the existence of evil without throwing the blame of it upon the gods, had peopled the lower world and the space between the sky and the earth with innumerable existences, — the souls of the just or tutelary genii, those of the wicked or malevolent daemons. From this belief (vague and ill defined, but all the more popular on that account) philosophy had derived the theory of the genii, — a convenient doctrine, whereby the idea of the divine unity was harmonized with respect for the established religion. Executors of the decrees of Providence, these genii or daemons were in constant relation with the earth, strengthening the good, like the guardian angels of the Church, terrifying the wicked, and presiding over all the acts of civil and religious life.⁴ It seemed as

¹ Dion, lxxiii. 16; lxxix. 11.

² The teaching of Plato on daemons is found especially in the *Phædo* and the *Symposium*. "The daemons," he says in the latter work, "fill up the space which separates heaven from earth. They are the bond which unites the great All with itself. As the divinity has never any direct communication with man, it is by the mediation of daemons that the gods hold intercourse with him in the evening shades or in sleep."

³ *Symposium*, 28. Cf. Maury, *op. cit.* iii. 424. Henzen has given in his Index (pp. 27–29) the curious list of the names of genii supplied by the inscriptions. Among the *graffiti* of the *excubitoria* occupied at Rome by the guards, is found an invocation to the genius of the corps, and in a Dacian inscription another to the genius of the excise. A veteran dedicates a *Hercules defensor genio centuriæ* (Orelli, 941) to the health of the Emperors.

⁴ *Ferunt theologi, in lucem editis hominibus cunctis, salva firmitate fatali, hujusmodi quaedam velut actus rectura numina sociari* (Amm. Marcellin., xxi. 14); and he quotes two lines from Menander reproducing the same thought: "At the side of every man on his entrance into the world is a familiar genius, who guides him in his existence."

if all the good and evil that happened to mankind could be explained by the action of this somewhat undisciplined army, whose chief resided in the depths of the empyrean, calm in his impenetrable designs. The complaints of earth never reached as far as this divinity, the author of all good; they were arrested by the evil genii, authors of all ill, who would some day have to answer for it before the supreme judge.

Maximus of Tyre, who is supposed to have been one of the instructors of Marcus Aurelius, had, like Dion Chrysostom, travelled extensively, and, like him, discoursed much, spreading the precepts of sound morality and the belief in the immortality of the soul. He often recurs to this theory of the genii. "For when the soul," he says, "is liberated hence, having divested herself of the body, and left it to be corrupted in the earth in its own time and according to its own law, she becomes a daemon instead of a man, and with pure eyes surveys herself, being neither darkened by flesh nor disturbed by color, nor confined, as with a wall, by turbid air; but she beholds beauty itself with her own eyes, and rejoices in the vision. Then, too, she bewails her former life, but proclaims the present blessed. Then she bewails the condition of her kindred souls who still revolve about the earth, and, through philanthropy, she is willing to associate with them and correct them when they deviate from rectitude. But she is ordered by divinity to descend to earth and become mingled with every kind of men, with every human fortune, disposition, and art, so as to give assistance to the worthy, avenge those that are injured, and punish those that injure.¹

"I will indicate to you by a more perspicuous image what I have said," he continues. "Conceive a mighty empire and powerful kingdom, in which all voluntarily assent to the best and most honorable of kings. But let the boundary of this empire be, not the River Halys, nor the Hellespont, nor the Moeotis, nor the shores of the Ocean, but heaven and earth: that above, and this beneath; heaven, like a circular, infrangible wall of brass, comprehending everything in its embrace, and earth like a prison in which noxious bodies are bound; while the mighty king himself, stately seated as if he were law, imparts to the obedient the safety which he contains in him-

¹ *Diss.* xxvii.

self. The associates of this empire are many visible and many invisible gods, some of them encircling the vestibules themselves, as messengers of a nature most allied to the king, his domestics, and the associates of his table; but others being subservient to these, and again others possessing a still more subordinate nature. You see a succession and an order of dominion descending from divinity to earth.



THE OCEAN PERSONIFIED.¹

“God, therefore, being established in his own region, governs the heavens and the order which they contain. But there are secondary immortal natures proceeding from him, which are called secondary gods, less powerful than divinity, but more powerful than man.”²

Apuleius thought the same.³ But if the gods honored under so many names were only the personification of forces set in action

¹ Marble statue found on the Campus Martius, and called Marforio by the Romans (Capitoline Museum).

² Denis, *op. cit.* ii. 228.

³ “There are certain divine powers of a middle nature situated in the interval of the air,

by the divine power, there was no reason, if this interpretation were admitted, to refuse them a homage which ascended to their common master. None of the philosophic schools therefore attacked the established worship directly, that of Epicurus no more than that of Zeno.¹ The pupils of Socrates, whatever name they took, like their master, sacrificed on all altars, and by doing this escaped the peril which the Christians encountered. In this they showed no hypocrisy. Plutarch, the high-priest of Apollo, fulfilled his sacerdotal functions with the zeal of the early days. He found a great comfort in them, without the least scruple of conscience. The genii made all clear to him; by them he preserved the dogma of the one good God. Moreover, one of the first adversaries of Christian dogma, the philosopher Celsus, declared he could see no difference between the angels of the new doctrine and the daemons of Plato.² The Fathers of the Church accepted the Platonic system, but used it as a weapon against polytheism, explaining as the result of Satanic power the oracles and miracles by which paganism gained authority.³

We have not yet spoken of the Gnostics. It was needful to reserve for the end of our review the intellectual fact which best characterizes the period which we are studying; namely, the medley of systems. Thanks to the "Roman peace," the peoples were no longer at war; but the philosophies and religions were in conflict, each shattering against some adversary its particular forms, and all of them interchanging ideas, rites, and even the dress of their priests, up to the moment when nearly all of them will unite in Catholicity, that is to say, in universality.

Gnosticism, the complete expression of this confusion, was its natural product. Composed of elements borrowed from the doctrines

between the highest ether and the earth below, through whom our aspirations and our desires are conveyed to the gods. These the Greeks call by the name 'daemons;' and being placed as messengers between the inhabitants of earth and heaven, they carry from the one to the other, prayers and bounties, supplications and assistance, being a kind of interpreters and message-carriers for both" (*De Deo Socratis*). This book of Apuleius is an eloquent exposition of Socratic ethics.

¹ Plutarch (*Stoic Contradictions*) shows the disciples of these two schools sacrificing to the gods. Yet they, especially Epictetus, opposed divination, which, being personal to the inquirer, had no necessary bond with the established worship, so that to neglect it was no revolt against the state religion.

² Origen, *Contra Celsum*, v. 4.

³ Cf. Maury, *Hist. des relig. de la Grèce ancienne*, iii. 429 et seq.

then dominant in the Empire, — Jewish, Christian, polytheistic, — even from the religions of Chaldaea, of Persia, and perhaps of India, it was neither a philosophy, or rational system, nor a religion ; that is to say, a law, a book, a sacred text. In it imagination played the principal part, and caused the mind to be exposed to all sorts of adventures. Adepts of a mysterious science which they styled a direct emanation of the divinity, the Gnostics had no body of doctrine, and consequently were not united by the bond of a com-



GNOSTIC STONE SERVING FOR AMULET OR TALISMAN.¹

mon dogma nor by the discipline of a common church ; accordingly, Gnosticism had numberless aspects. By the side of the grossest practices was seen the highest spirituality. At bottom, it was a school of mysticism ; that is, of religious disorder, and sometimes immorality, by reason of its proud indifference to works. Thus, Basilides taught that the “perfect” were elevated by the force of piety above all law, and that no vice was in their case a defilement. Gnosticism was necessarily the mother of numerous heresies which, after having disturbed the Empire, were destined to reappear as a very formidable enemy in the darkest period of the Middle Ages.²

¹ A symbolie medley of Roman beliefs and Egyptian ideas. Crystal, emerald-color, published by Caylus, *Recueil*, etc., pl. 65. In the centre Jupiter, with the thunderbolts, surrounded by the Egyptian serpent, holding his own tail, — a symbol of eternity. Below, the crocodile ; on the sides, Castor and Pollux ; above, Janus, Cybele, or Rome, and the hawk, the Egyptian symbol of the sun.

² On the gnosis, see Matter, *Histoire du gnosticisme*. An analogous movement of confused

These are many different systems; they have, however, a common tendency, — contempt for the flesh, the worship of the spirit, and the belief, from day to day strengthened, in a divine Providence. All philosophy then tends towards idealism, and all religion towards mysticism. The world goes forward into the future by these two roads, which often become one; and among the descendants of Cato and Fabricius, in this people of self-seeking workers or greedy usurers, many are already possessed by mystic ardor. The populations of the Oriental provinces, where religious exaltation is endemic, were the first to be stirred by this excitement; those of the West yielded to it by degrees. Now we see how it becomes possible to make these men relinquish earth, which they so much desired to hold, for heaven, which is given them in hope. We see how, by the current of the age, the evangelical preparation came about; how all was gradually made ready in the pagan world for the triumph of those spiritual ideas which had first appeared in the teaching of Anaxagoras, Socrates, and Plato, as philosophy; in the mysteries, under the covering of symbols; and of which Christianity will be the religious, that is to say, the popular, form. The course of events is always thus. Neither in history nor in nature is there any sudden revolution. The beliefs that are dying out, meet those that are coming into life. As the continents slowly change their form, slowly also do ideas make their way in the human race, and those which a new doctrine considers after its triumph to have been enemies, have often in reality been only its precursors.¹

VI. — CHRISTIANITY.

If we were writing the internal history of Christianity, it would be our duty to recognize and follow other currents of ideas which have contributed to form its mighty stream. It was not without

spirituality, interpretations, and allegories gave birth also, about the time when Christianity began, to the Kabbala, the teaching of which has been proved by M. Franck, in his work on *The Kabbala, or the Religious Philosophy of the Hebrews*, to be both pantheistic and mystic.

¹ This is the opinion of a number of fathers and doctors of the Church. The Middle Ages never doubted that Socrates, Cicero, Vergil, Seneca, even Aristotle and Trajan, would sit among the elect.

result upon themselves that the Jews had dwelt among the believers in the Avesta, and that their lot was cast in the midst of a world so agitated by the religious idea. Since the time of Alexander, all the Hellenic East had been undergoing regeneration. In ancient Egypt, even in Palestine, the methods of the Greek philosophers were employed for the explanation of religious legends. The Bible had ceased to be an imperative text. The Jews of the school of Tiberias, and especially those of Alexandria, practised Saint Paul's maxim: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;" and Philo shows us how many innovations arose from the free interpretation of Scripture. But the study of the origin of Christianity and the exegesis of the New Testament are not within the domain of political history. This concerns itself with Christianity only when it has become a social fact; that is to say, when it interests a portion of the community and draws upon itself the notice of the authorities. It was, on the other hand, the duty of political history to study the developments resulting from the influence of Greek philosophy in the Roman world. It was proper to show how many things at that time concurred in creating the new spirit, which, under the direction of the Church, was to lead the Graeco-Latin in paths hitherto unknown to it.

In the preceding volumes we have seen Christianity faintly discernible in the capital of the Empire as early as the time of Nero and Domitian; the proofs, at the time of Trajan, of the great progress which it was silently making; finally, under Hadrian and Antoninus, the courage of its apologists, and in the time of Marcus Aurelius, that of its martyrs.

At the death of this Emperor, Christianity had been in existence a century and a half, which it had employed in defining the doctrine of the Trinity, of the Incarnate Redeemer, of the Spirit who enlightens souls by grace, of saving faith, of the resurrection of the body for the reward of the just and the punishment of the wicked. It had made up its canon of Scripture, regulated its worship and the discipline of its first phase of existence. By the dogma of the communication of the Holy Spirit to the Church, it had prepared its further developments and established the doctrinal power of the bishops, who were clothed with the double authority given by popular election and religious consecration. The

number of works which the Church declared apocryphal, and of the heresies which it had already condemned,¹ prove its vitality. For a long time the faith had been propagated only in the lower strata of the population,² to whom it carried consolation for all forms of suffering, and that virtue, charity, which Christ and Saint Paul had taught from the beginning. It condemned riches, which seemed to it "a fruit of iniquity or a heritage of injustice;"³ and it loved poverty and suffering as the condition of the redemption of the earthly life. The philosophers, who opened their heaven only to the choicest minds, reproached it for its solicitude for the humble. "While," said one of them, "other religions summon to their worship those whose consciences are pure, the Christians promise the kingdom of God to the wicked and the foolish; that is, to those who are accursed of the gods."⁴ Celsus, in speaking thus, clearly marked the essential point, — redemption in the Church, and not out of it, by the common faith, and no longer by individual effort.⁵

How sweet, on the contrary, to the ears of the destitute were those words speaking of equality before God, of the redemption of souls by the Son of God, who had been despitefully used, beaten with rods, and crucified like a slave! The passion of Christ was their own history, and the Good News seemed brought especially to the lowly. The hero of ancient days had been the strong and the valiant, Hercules or Theseus, and at a later time the wise man: the hero of the new period was to be the saint; and all could become this, for it was by love and not by learning that Christianity proposed to conquer the world.

For ordinary instruction there are at this period no ambitious

¹ Thirty-two, on the authority of the author of the *Philosophumena*, which is a refutation of the heresies written between 230 and 240, attributed to Hippolytus, bishop of the Portus Tiberis. But a good number of these heresies proceeded from Gnostics who were only half Christians.

² Yet Pliny already had said of the Christians in the year 111: *Multi omnis aetatis, omnis ordinis utriusque sexus.*

³ Bourdaloue, quoting from Saint Jerome in the sermon on Wealth.

⁴ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii. 59: . . . *Quisquis infelix est hunc Dei regnum accipiet.* Whom do you call a sinner? he asks also. *Injustum, furem, murorum effractorem, veneficum, sacrilegum, mortuorum spoliatores. Ecquos alios vocaret, qui latronum constaret societatem.* (*Ibid.*) At all times, parties cast similar accusations at their adversaries, in the name of philosophy, religion, or politics.

⁵ The Stoics, according to Galen, or the author of the *περὶ φιλοσόφων ἱστορίας* (vol. xix. p. 313, edit. Kühn), annihilated both the body and soul of the ignorant; the souls of the wise survived *usque ad flagrationem.*

systems or subtle discussions on the essence of things, no minute precepts or law difficult to comprehend. Salvation is faith in Him “who became visible in order to bring men to the love of invisible things,”¹ and the Spirit, the Divine Word, which “bloweth where it listeth,” gives this faith by grace. For law, there is the Sermon on the Mount, with the adorable parables of which it was said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” To attain heaven there is need only of faith and love. Plato reached the same point with Christianity when he made the whole moral law consist in the imitation of God, Ὁμοίωσις τῷ Θεῷ. But his God is not a man, and the ideal that he proposes is inaccessible. Tertullian, on the contrary, can say: “After Jesus we have nothing more to learn; after the Gospel we have nothing more to seek.”² We have here the example and the law.

The Christian theology, notwithstanding the obscurities in which Saint Paul enveloped it, was full of light and life. It was personified in a God absolutely distinct from Nature; in a God-man conqueror of evil and of death, who was exhibited to the human race as the absolute type of perfection; and later was proposed to women the imitation of the Virgin Mother and her infinite love. There was nothing obscure in the metaphysical aspect of the new theology, yet lofty intellects found space in it for the grandest speculations: it was a cloudless sky, where it seemed as if everything could be reached, touched, and understood. Now, in the conflict of beliefs, the victory is always with that one whose formulas are most precise and whose symbols are most clear. The supreme god of the Aryan race, Jupiter, had been “The Heaven-Father;”³ Christianity replaced this by “Our Father who art in Heaven;” and the entire revolution is summed up in this change.

The worship was pure; it had no bloody sacrifice nor anything which did not tend to awaken the best feelings of our nature, — hymns, prayers, the reading of the Gospel, and the great act of direct communion with God. Although some, who had already begun to

¹ Preface to the Mass of the Nativity: . . . *Ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus per hunc in invisibilibus amorem rapiamur.*

² *De Praescriptione adv. haer.* 8.

³ This is the meaning of the word Jupiter, the Zeus of the Greeks, the Varuna of the Hindoos, the Ahura-Mazda, or Ormuzd, of the Persians, the Svarogu of the Slavs (James Darmesteter, *Rev. de l'Hist. des religions*, i. 386).

make Christianity the religion of the God of divine wrath, sought to give it a sad and melancholy exterior, for the majority it was the religion of the Good Shepherd who watches over his flock, who protects it against the raging wolf, and who brings home the wandering lamb on his shoulders. This image of grace, goodness, and love, frequently repeated in the most ancient catacombs of Rome,¹ was at that time the favorite symbol of the Christian faith. As in this all was hope, all even in death breathed calmness and

JUPITER TONANS.⁴

serenity. A dove represented the soul rising towards heaven; a lamb, the flock of the faithful; a vine, covering the walls of the sepulchral chamber with its numerous branches and its purple grapes, represented by a symbol full of grace the unity of the Church, its progress, and the abundant pleasant fruits of faith. The cross, "the sign of the Lord,"² which the Middle Ages placed everywhere, with the bleeding wounds and tragic figure of the Crucified, is rare in the catacombs; but everything there is suggestive of it, — the faithful "who with outstretched hands raises his pure thought to God;"³ the ship gliding over the wave with its full sails borne by the mast and yards; the bird which rises in the air on "the cross of its wings," seeming to carry a prayer to

God.⁵ Christian symbolism takes its origin from the evangelical

¹ See *Roma sotterranea* of M. de Rossi, and Roller, *Les Catacombes de Rome*.

² . . . τὸ κυριακὸν σημεῖον (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* vi. 11).

³ Minue. Felix, *Octav.* 29.

⁴ A fine statue in black basalt (*Capit. Museum*, vol. iii. pl. 3).

⁵ . . . *Et alarum cruce pro manibus extendunt* (Tertullian, *De Orat.* 39). On the emblem

pastorals and from the need of concealing on the tombs from pagan eyes that faith which was visible to the faithful.

Thus, simple and profound in its dogmas, pure in its morality, miraculous in its traditions, and appearing to men in the divine figure of the mild Galilæan Master, this teaching had at once that



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.¹

element of the marvellous necessary to minds enamoured of the supernatural and that elevation required by those who wished to understand their faith while they accepted it. To the anxious and unhappy it brought what they did not find, or found but imperfectly, in Oriental worships and philosophic systems, — a prom-

of the fish, see *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions*, 1880, p. 45. The Chevalier Rossi, who has won the catacombs for science, says that the cross came into constant use only in the fifth century, and the one crucifix which has been found there is not earlier than the seventh century.

¹ Fresco from the crypt of Lucina, copied in the Museum of the Lateran. (Roller, *ibid.* pl. xvii.)

ise of salvation, and, consequently, hope. The spirit of the time desired prophesying, exorcisms, miracles: the Church furnished these; for Heaven performs them when the conscience of the multitudes asks it. "The disciples of Jesus," says Saint Irenaeus, "have received from their Master the gift of miracles; they exorcise demons, predict the future, heal the sick, and raise the dead."¹

How large was the number of Christian believers at the end of the Antonine period? Tertullian, with his lively imagination, saw them filling cities and towns, camps and tribes, the Forum and the Senate.² But the pagan of the *Octavius* still calls them "the people in darkness."³ In reality, they were a very small minority, compared to the mass of the inhabitants of the Empire. The first duty of Christians was the care of the poor. Now, a letter of Pope Cornelius of the year 251, in which it is said that the Church of Rome had aided fifteen hundred indigent persons, forbids us to suppose that this community was at that time very large.⁴ Sixty years later, the great city, the guardian of its old divinities, was still full of pagans; Constantine did not find one Christian in the Senate, and at the end of the fourth century Symmachus enumerates but very few in the great Roman families. The question as to the number of believers at this time is, however, of very slight importance; it is the ardent minorities who bring about revolutions, and ardor was not wanting in the Christians, who, after the edict of tolerance issued by Gallienus in 260, rapidly multiplied.

Educated men and the high society of Rome in the second century were not acquainted with Christianity, or knew it very

¹ *Adv. haeres.* ii. 48, ap. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.* v. 7.

² *Apolog.* 37.

³ *Oct.* 8: . . . *Latebrosa et lucifuga natio, in publico maesta, in angulis garrula.* From Saint Jerome we may conclude (*De Viris illustr.*) that Minucius Felix lived between Tertullian and Saint Cyprian. Celsus speaks as he does, ap. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, i. 27; iii. 44 *et seq.*; vi. 14; vii. 42.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* vi. 43. Origen (*Contra Celsum*, viii. 69) says of the Christians: . . . *πάνν ὀλίγοι*. According to Saint Justin (*Apol.* i. 68), the product of the offertories served to help "widows, orphans, and those who are in distress through illness or for any other reason, those who are in chains, and strangers who come unexpectedly." De la Bastie (*Du Souverain pontificat des emp. rom.*) estimates that in the time of Constantine "the Christians were a twelfth, possibly not more than a twentieth, part of the Empire" (*Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.* xv. 77, 1743). Beugnot (*Hist. de la décad. du paganisme en Occident*, capp. ii. and iii.) thinks the same. Chastel (*Hist. de la destruction du paganisme en Orient*) believes also that the Christians in the West formed only the fifteenth and in the East the tenth of the whole population.

imperfectly, — as we see from the works of Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, the younger Pliny, Plutarch, Lucian, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius himself. In the writings of Apuleius, a contemporary and fellow-countryman of Tertullian, and a man curious “respect-



CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS.¹

ing divine things,” there is not a word from which we can infer that he had the slightest idea of its existence.² Some took it for one of the numberless philosophical sects. When Novatius left the Church, he said: “I am going to another philosophy.”³ But every day its strength increased, because it alone was able to cure that malady unknown to the sceptical and light-hearted generations,

¹ The anchor, the doves, the lamb, the monogram, the palm-branch indicating the victory of the Christian triumphing over death; two doves perched on the edge of a vase to drink thence the refreshment promised to an ardent faith, *refrigerium*; a woman holding a palm and a crown, the symbol of victory gained by faith. (Roller, *op. cit.* pl. x. and xi.)

² Tillemont does not understand how it could be that “Plutarch, the most learned man of the period, the most inquisitive about all things concerning philosophy or religion, has not even mentioned their name” (*Hist. des empereurs*, ii. 295).

³ Ἐφη ἑτέρας εἶναι φιλοσοφίας ἐραστῆς (Euseb., *Hist. eccles.* vi. 43).

which the author of the *Pseudo-Clementines* expresses in one word: "My soul is sick;"¹ and as it gave confidence in a future beyond the grave, it animated with an ardent spirit of proselytism all who embraced it. As soon as a community of believers was formed, it began to increase, "as the farm is filled with good corn at the time of harvest," and some one of them was soon found who accepted the Master's command: "Go and teach all nations." This new preacher of the word took his staff, divided his property among the poor, sure to find support himself wherever he should meet brethren, and went out to establish a new community. Nothing stopped the missionaries of the faith, neither the length of the journey, nor the anger of the populations wounded by "these despisers of the gods" in the usages and affections of their public and private life. If ever men appeared to their contemporaries the irreconcilable enemies of the established order, assuredly it was these Christians who, at each step into the midst of this society, ran against some idol which they wished to break, or some custom which they called sacrilege. Many perished in popular tumults, or from Trajan's time were, as rebels, sent by the magistrates to the quarries and the mines; a small number, judicially condemned, perished in the amphitheatres or under the axe of the executioner.

Meanwhile the Church began to emerge from the obscurity which had protected its origin; some pagan philosophers had already joined its ranks, and Justin had boldly presented it openly to the world. It was destined to increase rapidly, and from the reign of Commodus to make its way into the highest ranks of Roman society. The powerful and simple originality of its dogma gave it a strong attractive force; and that episcopal organization which the pagan sacerdotalism had not known, enabled it to give unity to its action and counsels, as well as to sustain the propagandism of each by the efforts of all.

For cultivated minds the old natural religion was dead, and philosophers were coming to a new conception of the divine which, in its principle and applications, was a great advancement in the religious genesis of humanity. This conception had a singular agreement with that of the Christians. Besides, the New Testa-

¹ *Homilies*, v. 2.

ment is from beginning to end only a discourse on morality, which leaves very little room for dogmatic discourse; while philosophy on its part was renouncing the metaphysical ambitions of the ancient schools. Christianity found, therefore, in pagan society a number of elements to which it could lay claim as harmonious with its own nature, and whereby it could effect an entrance into the hearts of the populations and gently incline them towards itself. These elements were the following:—

The pure morality of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, with all their precepts for the examination of conscience, for direction and preaching;

The idea of the common origin of man, and of the appropriate feeling of brotherhood;

Charity as an essential virtue;

Contempt for earthly things and bodily pleasures as a principal means of moral improvement;

The love of poverty, even of death, which drove so many Stoics to suicide and so many martyrs to voluntary sacrifice of life;

The theodicy of Plato, Plutarch, the Platonists, and Maximus of Tyre, with their spirits intermediate between God and man;

The idea of the divine unity, and the belief in rewards and penalties;

Lastly, regeneration by initiation in the mysteries, by the bloody baptism of the taurobolium or by baptism with water, by the oblation of bread and wine, and by the holy anointing of the forehead of the mystics.¹ “Your religion,” said Saint Justin to the worshippers of the heathen gods, “is nothing else than an incomplete Christianity;” and Clement: “As the Bacchantes tore in pieces Pentheus, so the philosophic sects have divided *ad infinitum* the indivisible light of the Word;”² and he presented the new doctrine as the achievement of the work begun by the human reason. Tertullian, who so proudly breaks away from philosophy, wrote the

¹ So many rites in the mysteries of Mithra resembled Christian rites that Tertullian called him *simius Dei* (cf. *De Corona*, 15, and *De Baptismo*, 5), and Saint Justin saw in it a work of Satan; but the Christian Father was not afraid to say: “Our principal dogmas do not differ from those of the ancient philosophers” (*Apol.* i. 55); and again: “Those who have lived according to reason knew the Word before his coming to the earth, and were Christians” (*Apol.* i. 66; *Dial. cum Tryph.* 70 and 105). Lactantius says the same (*Inst. div.* vii. 7). Seneca might have written his work *De Opificio Dei*.

² *Strom.* i. 9.

famous phrase: *Testimonium animae naturaliter christianae*; many of the Fathers and doctors of the Church shared this sentiment, of which Saint Augustine has given the completest statement: "By the change of a few of their words and ideas, the Platonists would become Christians."¹

This philosophic Christianity even seems by an external sign to come near the ancient philosophies and to desire to be identified with them in the eyes of the multitude. Christian teachers assumed the philosopher's cloak; like their predecessors they appeared in public places, reproving the people, reproaching them for their vices, and making known the one self-existent God, Him who in the Bible is defined as *I Am that I Am*, and who at Delphi was honored with one word εἶ, Thou Art. If any were sur-

prised to find some novelties in their discourses, they replied: "We teach nothing new or extraordinary, nothing which the books of the schools and common wisdom do not recommend."²

A dawning Christian art was also engrafted on ancient art, now rapidly dying out. But we must not fail to recognize, though



SYMBOLS OF THE CROSS, THE FISH, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, ETC.³

at the risk of running counter to much imaginative enthusiasm, that the paintings in the catacombs are only crude attempts. These

¹ *Paucis mutatis verbis atque sententiis christiani fierent* (*De Civ. Dei*, iv. 7). Minucius Felix says also in his *Octavius*: "It seems to me that at times the ancient philosophers agree so well with the Christians that we could maintain either that the Christians of the present day are philosophers, or that the philosophers of former times were Christians."

² . . . *Nihil nos aut novum aut portentosum suscepisse de quo non etiam communes et publicae litterae nobis patrocinantur* (Tertullian, *De Test. animae*, 1). In this study of the ideas which were struggling into life in the second century, we have sought to show only the general character of the Christian idea; in chapters xci. and xcii. we shall refer more fully to the formation of dogma and discipline, because, in the time of Severus, Christendom has become a powerful body, and it is at that period that the great struggle between it and the state really begins.

³ From an engraved stone published by Garucci and Martigny. It is doubtless only of the fourth or fifth century (Roller, *op. cit.* pl. xx. No. 6).

beginnings of Christian art are to the art itself what an infant's wailings are to the masculine voice which fills the great church. It is apparent that these frescos are the efforts of poor artists working for very poor employers. Two things appear in them which are destined to endure, — symbolism and contempt for form.



ORPHEUS PLAYING ON THE LYRE.¹

In the most ancient catacombs many of the decorations are borrowed from pagan sources, but diverted from their old meanings to the expression of new thoughts. We see Orpheus playing the lyre to savage beasts: it is Christ who calms the fierce instincts of the soul; Bacchus is the god of the celestial vintage; Psyche, the

¹ Painting from the catacomb of Calixtus, which the Chevalier Rossi refers to the time of Marcus Aurelius or Commodus (*Roma sotterranea*, vol. ii. pl. 18). Around the principal subject are seen Moses striking the rock, Daniel in the lions' den, David with his sling about to slay the enemy, etc.

divine love; the Jordan, the god of streams. The Good Shepherd, who carries on his shoulders the tired lamb, representing suffering humanity, might be taken for Hermes Kriophoros, or the rustic Pan. Ulysses fastened to the mast of his ship that he may be secure against the delusive strains of the Sirens—this was the Church passing through the temptations of the world without yielding to them.¹ The seed which renews its life after having decayed in the earth, the grape trodden in the wine-vat whence the wine runs out, had been, in the Eleusinian mysteries, symbols of resurrection; they were the same to the Christian. The fish so often represented does not belong to the Græco-Latin mythology;² but the garlands of leaves, vases of flowers and fruits, birds, and the like, surrounding the symbolic representations, remind us of pagan decorative art. In the endless transformation of things, nothing, in fact, is improvised. To express new beliefs the first Christian artists used ancient forms, just as the early Fathers of the Church so often employed the language of Seneca and Plato. But this twofold homage paid to the past will soon be forgotten. The theologians will do battle with the philosophers, and the new art will end by killing the old. The latter had realized the most perfect harmony between body and soul. To Jupiter, Pheidias gave majesty with a proud and powerful form which has remained the type of masculine beauty. Christianity, the enemy of the flesh, will reduce it to being simply a transparent, fragile covering, and in these emaciated bodies no longer will be found the ideal beauty in which the Creator must be pleased because it is His handiwork. Christian art will be a true art only when, with Raphael, it shall again become pagan by uniting the worship of form to that of expression.³

¹ De Rossi, *op. cit.* "In some of the most ancient chambers in the catacombs," says Dean Burgon, "one can at first hardly tell Christian from pagan frescoes" (*Letters from Rome*, p. 250). Christian sculpture does not appear till the fourth century.

² In the symbolism of the Fathers, the sea signifies humanity; men are meant by the fish; and the fish *par excellence* is the God-Man, Jesus Christ. By a casual conjunction they could form, with the initial letters of the five words which designate him, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, an acrostic which makes up the word ἰχθῆς, fish.

³ M. Th. Roller ends his work on the *Catacombes de Rome* (vol. II. pp. 363-365), by a series of conclusions, from which we select those relating to the first four centuries:—

"In the first century of the Christian era there were probably family sepulchres underground, having the general construction of what we now call catacombs. But nothing remains, except an insignificant inscription, from which we can with certainty carry their origin so far back as this.

"In the second century, the catacombs of Domitilla, Priscilla, Prætextatus, Lucina,

VII. — SUMMARY.

THE conquest of the world by the Romans produced four revolutions as its necessary consequence: —

before passing from their private character to a collective use, show us the earliest elements of the subjects which we shall now mention.

“The parable of the vine, already enriched by extra-scriptural variations, indicates either the eternal food, or the Church in the spiritual sense; this vine is cultivated by the dead saints, or by the angels of God, who gather the vintage and express the juice of the grape. These same spirits do harvest work in the field of souls, or collect the property of God in the other life.

“In the agapae, which were an adaptation to Christianity of the ancient usage of funereal feasts, the elements of the Holy Supper were received under the forms of bread and wine. The symbolical presence of Christ is indicated in it under the acrostic of the sacred *ἰχθύς*, — a sign of recognition between the faithful; but the two species of the communion are therein represented. The Christ himself is only represented under this mysterious hieroglyph of the fish, or as the prophetic child, or in the parable of the good shepherd, or at his baptism, while the believing soul is symbolized in the attitude of a suppliant or by the dove.

“Probably as early as this we see the magi bringing offerings to the infant seated on Mary’s knees. A prophet points to the star which enlightens the nations in the person of Jesus, a child in his mother’s lap. John the Baptist administers baptism to the Christ in the same water perhaps which flowed forth under Moses’ rod.

“The victory of the Christian over persecution and death is proclaimed by the triumph of Daniel in the den of lions, and perhaps by Susanna proved innocent.

“Life and immortality are exhibited by the entrance of a Christian into the everlasting mansions and by the miracle of Jonah. The inscriptions are simple and brief. They express chiefly affection, bonds of relationship, without worldly honors or laudations. We find those of a married deacon and of elders, *πρεσβύτεροι*, priests.

“The symbols are the anchor of hope, the dove-spirit, and the divine fish.

“In the third century, the priestly office forms a distinct order from the episcopal in the hierarchy, but the priest is sometimes a physician also. The exorcist is included in the ranks of the hierarchy. Epitaphs have on them the designation of bishops. On their tombs the popes as yet bear this qualification only.

“The preceding symbols are developed. The *ἰχθύς* saviour takes the form of the dolphin; he carries the bark of the Church; he hangs from the anchor, the trident, as from a cross. The anchor, even the trident, conceals the death-instrument of Calvary. The masts of ships begin to take the form of gibbets.

“Christianity borrows from pagan sculpture subjects which can be adapted to Christian thought, as it has borrowed innocent allegories from painting. The expressions frequently occur: ‘he sleeps;’ ‘peace in God;’ ‘peace be with thee;’ ‘withdrawn in peace;’ ‘the peace of the Lord and Christ;’ ‘in the Lord and in Jesus Christ;’ ‘God be with thy spirit;’ ‘thy spirit is with the saints;’ ‘he sleeps in peace;’ ‘thy spirit be in good;’ ‘he lives, thou livest, or shalt live in peace.’

“Lamps borrow from the vine, the palms, and the evangelical pastorals, symbols appropriate to religious thought. The two sacraments of the Lord have found new formulas in a subtle symbolism. The water which issued from the rock struck by the miraculous rod forms the stream in which the Divine Fisher catches men’s souls, or in which neophytes are baptized; it heals paralytics like the pool of Bethesda; it flows from Jacob’s Well to quench thirsty souls as the word of life. It becomes a sea where floats that Noah’s ark in which

A *political* revolution: the city, becoming a world, was compelled to substitute a government by one for that of many.

A *social* revolution: the conquered have taken the places of

humanity received the waters of baptism from on high and from below. The Holy Supper was prefigured by the sacrifice of Abraham, expressed in the benediction of the elements in the agapae, in the tripod bearing loaves and some *ἱχθῦς*, in the basket of bread, and the *secchia* of the shepherd.

"The soul, refreshed and fed, with Lazarus rises again, and with Jonah passes through the monster of the sepulchre without dying.

"The three Israelitish children in Babylon pray in the furnace without being consumed, -- an image of the Church passing through the fires of persecution without perishing.

"Some changes insinuate themselves into Christian thought; it borrows from paganism and the apocryphal books. Orpheus is known already as a type of Christ; Tobias is perhaps at this time admitted with his wonderful fish. We now begin to hear a sigh, the expression of a wish in favor of the dead, first that they may live in God, then that they may live among the souls of the saints or of the elect; a wish is expressed for their refreshment from God. Perhaps this blessing is asked on their behalf while awaiting the definitive reward after the resurrection. The sacrifice of thanksgiving is offered to God for them. There are doubts as to the invocation of saints at this period.

"The fourth century, from the beginning, develops the sigh and the wish in favor of the dead into an explicit prayer on their behalf. A favorable influence is also expected from their intercession: 'Ask for such a one . . .'; 'be favorable to . . .'; 'keep in remembrance in thy prayers.'

"Pilgrimages to the tombs of martyrs now become habitual. Funeral caves begin to be changed into chapels. There are celebrated rites commemorative of the death of saints; episcopal pulpits are set up there. Martyrs' sepulchres are utilized as communion-tables and become altars. Pilgrims inscribe names, invocations, and prayers on the walls; popes engrave laudatory epitaphs there.

"The epitaph of a bishop of Rome, while designating him as bishop, yet adds the title *papa*, but in an affectionate, not authoritative, sense.

"The agapae continue to be celebrated. But the hieroglyphic of the *ἱχθῦς* is sometimes replaced by the lamb. Water is mixed with the wine. The communicants sit around a table, not as heretofore reclining on the classic *triclinium*.

"It is no longer simply the human personality of Jesus which the sculptor dares to represent in the performance of miracles, it is the Christ glorified in heaven after the ascension. Peter or Paul receives from his hand the book of life, or even the Christ, seated on the *cathedra* of the doctors, teaches the faithful.

"The apostles are grouped around Jesus without any special part being assigned to any one of them, or any mark of pre-eminence. Yet Peter and Paul are often separated from the rest, on a footing of equality towards each other.

"The scenes of the passion are not represented, but often the appearance before Pilate.

"The legend of the ox and the ass at the Saviour's crib is popularized.

"Mary is seated on a *cathedra* of honor, but without spiritual character. She is then only a human mother receiving the magi on behalf of her son and with him.

"In the course of the fourth century, Mary is (perhaps?) adorned with precious jewels. There is, however, no portrait of her, any more than of Christ or the apostles.

"The ecclesiastical hierarchy becomes more distinct. The *cathedra* is the attribute of the bishop.

"The cross is still hidden under symbols. The monogram of Christ conceals it from profane eyes under the following different forms:—

✠

the conquerors by the force of numbers, of labor, and of intelligence, and the harsh and narrow laws of the Republic have become the broad and humane laws of the Empire.

A *philosophic* revolution: the different schools have become fused, as have the different peoples, and their systems have resulted in a vast synthesis. Instead of being occupied with metaphysics which divide, because proceeding from individual mental conceptions, they now study only ethics which unite, because springing from human nature, which is the same everywhere.

A *religious* revolution: at first, Rome adds to the local cults the worship of Rome and the Augusti; there is not a city in which their altar is not set up: it is the national religion. But the universal religion is coming. For the first time the world will see a form of worship which belongs neither to a city, a people, nor an empire; a religion without country, or at least one which desires no other than that of the human race.¹

Of these four revolutions, the first has been the subject of our narrative from the days of the Gracchi to Tiberius; the last, which began at the same time with the three others, was not completed until long after the Antonines; the second and third are detailed in the picture which has been drawn of Roman society in the first two centuries of our era.

If this picture be true, we shall be compelled to believe that this society had, in its civil institutions and in its manners, forces of conservation; in its ideas, forces of renewal. When we reflect on the skill of its government, where had followed one another more rulers knowing how to perform the duties of their office than any other absolute monarchy has ever shown in the same space of time,² on the discipline of its legions, the broad, active life of its populations, the vigorous constitution of the family and the city, the wisdom of its great schools of legislation and philosophy, whose last word was the unity of reason, of law, of humanity, and of the immaterial Principle of the universe, — then will it be recognized that

¹ Buddhism, before Christianity, and Islamism since, have equally had this characteristic of not being merely national religions.

² If we add to the forty-four years of the reign of Augustus the eighty-four years of the Antonine period, the entire reigns of Vespasian and Titus, a half, perhaps, of those of Tiberius, Claudius, Domitian, and the early years of Nero, we find that out of 210 years, the Empire had 160 years, not only of good government, but of good rulers.

the Empire of the Antonines was a robust body, having a grand intellectual life.

It is true that the Romans preserved three iniquities, — slavery, the abominable harshness of their penal laws, and the insulting distinction between the *humilior* and the *honestior*. Besides, the disagreement between the teaching of the wise and the life of the masses was great in this society eager for pleasure, which held, like so many others, much more firmly to its vices than to its beliefs. But slavery, with its natural consequence, the undue severity of punishments, was an institution of the law of nations which Christianity did not suppress, because only the passage of time and the progress of human thought could overcome it; besides, a contradiction between moral conduct and the ideal taught belongs to all periods. If the Empire had not contained other causes of ruin, these evils would not have been sufficient to destroy it. Unfortunately, in this aristocratic society an aristocracy did not exist able to support and hold in check its all-powerful head; and this ruler did not understand that instead of considering the Empire as an hereditary domain, he ought, after the example of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus, to leave it to the most worthy. The rights of blood won the day over those of the state. Marcus Aurelius selected a successor unsuitable both by reason of his youth and his vices for the exercise of absolute power, and this unbounded power Septimius Severus will give to the son who had sought to assassinate him; so that the orgies of despotism will be renewed. Under administrative pressure, life will cease to circulate freely in the social body, it will grow feeble, and the army, becoming daily more foreign to the civil population, will disturb the state by continual revolutions and will ruin its finances, while itself wholly losing, in the universal disorder, its discipline and its strength. Finally, the religious crisis is drawing near.

It seems that Christians and pagans might have come to a mutual understanding, since in certain respects Christianity was the religious formula of the pagan philosophies. But “from one end of the social world to the other, truths met without mutual recognition,”¹ and popular passion neutralized the goodwill of bishops and princes. While the mob in the great cities cried: “The

¹ Villemain, *Tableau de l'éloquence chrétienne au quatrième siècle.*

Christians to the lions!" and while the wits of the time pursued them with insulting sarcasms and caricatures which must have appeared to them an abomination,¹—in the ranks of the new sect there were also violent men who, instead of seeking, like Justin and Clement of Alexandria, to unite the followers of Plato to the disciples of Christ, sought to open between them an impassable abyss. Hermias borrows the wit of Lucian to hold up, in a religious pamphlet, the philosophers to derision, bringing forward the contradictions of the ancient metaphysics.² He says to them: "Everything in you is but darkness, deceitful night, perpetual illusion, an abyss of ignorance. Philosophers, see how the object of your ardent pursuit flies before you with an eternal flight; how the end which you propose to yourselves is inexplicable and vain." It is not simply the beliefs, but the very spirit, of pagan society which the Church proposes to change. The philosophic liberty of Greece had created science; the mystic idealism which is now about to take possession of the best class of minds, will delight only in theological speculations. At the head of his book Hermias had put the words of Saint Paul:³ "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" and Tertullian angrily repeats them. He curses that civilization which the wise would gladly have saved by gently permeating it with the new spirit; he rejects compromises with horror; he is not even willing that

CARICATURE OF THE CHRIST.⁴

¹ That, for example, of the Crucified with an ass's head, written on the walls of the Palatine, which, judging from some words of Tertullian, must have been very common.

² This is the precise title of his dialogue: *The Derision of the Pagan Philosophers* (*Διασυρμὸς τῶν ἑξω φιλοσόφων*).

³ *I. Cor.* i. 20.

⁴ A personage wrapped in a cloak, with the ears and feet of an ass; he has a mitre on his head and holds a book under his arm. The *Apologia* of Tertullian (16) explains this representation: *Sed nova jam Dei nostri in ista proxime civitate editio publicata est ex quo quidam frustrandis bestiis mercenarius noxius picturam proposuit cum ejusmodi inscriptione Deus christianorum onochœtes. Is erat auribus asinis, altero pede unguatus, librum gestans et togatus.* (*Cabinet de France*. Figurine of terra cotta in the Luynes collection, brought from Syria by Pérétié.)

the Christian should be a magistrate or a soldier, should celebrate the victory or the festival of the Emperor. He, at least, is content with this desertion of civil duties, but there are those who cry: Woe to the rich! and who desire the destruction of the Empire. About the year 250 another African, Commodianus, allows his delight to burst forth at the news of a formidable assault which the Goths and Persians were about making upon the Roman provinces. "At last," he exclaims, "may this empire of iniquity disappear!" He believes Rome to be already fallen, and sees her "weeping in eternity, she who boasted herself of being eternal!"¹

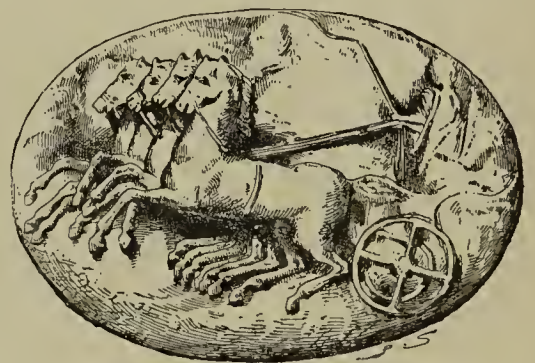


TRAGEDIAN STRIKING
HIMSELF WITH A
PONIARD.²

Not Rome alone is condemned; the world even is about to perish. Among the people the angry oracles of the Sibyl were circulating: "Woe to the women who shall see that day! Dark clouds shall surround the world. The heavenly fires shall be flung against each other, and the stars fall into the sea. A stream of fire shall flow from the sky, it shall consume the earth, and men shall gnash their teeth when they feel the soil growing hot under their feet. . . . Fathers, mothers, children shall all be burned up in the divine furnace,

and the vast Tartarus will be heard roaring. In the midst of their tortures they will call upon death, but death will not come."³

Tertullian, who was born near the close of the reign of Antoninus, utters these gloomy words: "Ah! how the sight will arouse my derision! What happiness, what exultation, when I see so many illustrious monarchs whose recep-



CHARIOTEER DRIVING A QUADRIGA.⁴

tion into heaven was publicly announced, groaning now in the

¹ *Luget in aeternum quae jactabat se aeternum.* Commodianus was called *mendicus Christi*.

² Engraved stone in the *Cabinet de France*. Cornaline of 10 mill. by 8, No. 1,892 in the Catalogue.

³ Boissier, *Les Origines de la poésie chrétienne*, after the *Oracula sibyllina* of Alexander, vol. ii. pp. 194 *et seq.*

⁴ Engraved stone, of excellent workmanship (17 mill. by 26). *Cabinet of France*, No. 1,866.

lowest darkness, with great Jove himself, and those, too, who bore witness of their exaltation; governors of provinces, too, who persecuted the Christian name, in fires more fierce than those with which in the days of their pride they raged against the followers of Christ! What world's wise men, besides, — the very philosophers who taught their followers that God had no concern in aught that is sublunary, and were wont to assure them that either they had no souls, or that they would never return to the bodies which at death they had left, now covered with shame before the poor deluded ones, as one fire consumes them!"¹ Gloomy images were these, desperate and threatening outcries which must have thrown terror and hatred into the hearts of the pagans.

On the other hand, polytheism, the official religion of the state, had no desire to abdicate in favor of these "beggars of Christ;" and, like Hercules in the fatal shirt, Rome can pluck it off only by tearing her flesh off with it. Accordingly, distrust and hate were to divide citizens; a cruel persecution will be succeeded by a half tolerance; blood will flow in streams, and the glorious spirit which had created the Greek and Latin civilizations will veil itself for ages. Then that Empire, which had to so many human beings been a blessing, weakened by religious war at the very time when the whole Barbarian world is making ready for the attack, will be overrun by invasions, and the peoples who had so long lived at peace under their own vine and fig-tree will see hostile camp-fires lighted in the midst of their lands.

The "Roman peace" is at an end forever, and for many centuries science and art are to be silent; but a great hope is about to be given to the world.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.²

¹ *De Spectaculis*, 30.

² Figure on a Christian lamp in terra-cotta found at Ostia. (Roller, *op. cit.* pl. xxviii.)

ELEVENTH PERIOD.

THE AFRICAN AND SYRIAN PRINCES (180-235 A. D.).

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

COMMODUS, PERTINAX, DIDIVS JULIANUS,¹ AND THE WARS OF SEVERUS (180-211 A.D.).

I. — COMMODUS (180-192).

THE 31st of August was a day doubly unlucky for the Empire : it was the birthday of Caligula and of Commodus. In the two hundred and ten years that Rome had had Emperors, the latter was the first “born in the purple” (*porphyrogenitus*);² but his reign was not of a character to recommend to the Romans the principle of hereditary succession. He was not yet nineteen when Marcus Aurelius died.³ His father had given him the best of tutors; but the perversity of nature rendered their cares fruitless, —for instance, at the age of twelve, finding his bath insufficiently heated, he ordered the servant who had charge of it to be thrown into the furnace. The absolute power which he inherited at so early an age completed his ruin, for those whom an old author calls “the court instructors”⁴ quickly obtained control over this

¹ The title of this chapter must not be taken strictly. Commodus, Pertinax, and Julianus are neither African nor Syrian. But the former does not deserve being ranked with the Antonines, and the two latter, who reigned so short a time, are connected by their history with the first African Emperor.

² Born, that is to say, during his father's reign.

³ Marcus Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Antoninus was born August 31st, 161, and succeeded Marcus Aurelius on the 17th of March, 180. For the history of his reign we have only the shapeless abridgment of Dion by Xiphilin (book lxxii.), the first book of Herodian, which is the work of a rhetorician, and the confused biography of Lampridius.

⁴ . . . *Qui in aula institutores habentur* (Lamp., *Comm.* 1). Dion, who knew him well, says of him, however (lxxii. 1), that he was not an evil-disposed person, but extremely timid, and so simple-minded that he became the slave of those who surrounded him.



COMMODUS IN HUNTING COSTUME (STATUE OF PENTELIC MARBLE. VATICAN, BRACCIO NUOVO, NO. 8).



feeble intellect. His bust and medals represent him with the brutalized look of a man whose mind has never cherished one worthy thought.¹ Being, as he was, both vicious and timid, he was sure to be also cruel, now that a word or even a gesture sufficed to rid him of those who caused him alarm.

The imperial power was not hereditary, but the Emperors always wished to make it so, and in the absence of all great institutions of government, it inevitably became so. The imperial children found in their cradles titles and honors which would have been to a citizen the reward of a long life in the public service. At the age of five, Commodus was made Caesar; at fourteen, member of all the sacred colleges and *princeps juventutis*, although he had not yet assumed the toga; at sixteen he was consul, imperator, and invested with the tribunitian power,² — that is to say, he had all the imperial titles, with the exception of that of Augustus — the sign of the supreme rank — and of Pontifex Maximus, which could not at that time be shared. Marcus Aurelius associated him with himself in the triumph over the Germans, and took him in 178 upon the expedition against the Marcomanni. The rumor was current that the imperial sage had been aided “in restoring to Nature the elements which she had lent him.” Dion Cassius accuses the physicians of Marcus Aurelius of having poisoned him at the instigation of Commodus; but Dion was a contemporary, and contemporaries have their ears ever open to all kinds of calumnies. Two winters passed in an inclement climate were dangerous for this man of the South, whose enfeebled constitution made him old and infirm at the age of fifty-nine. If we add to this the cares of an important war, and the plague supervening, we are not compelled to charge Commodus with parricide, — the list of whose crimes, moreover, is long enough without this addition. It is worthy of mention that the latter dedicated a temple to his father with priests, Antonine flamens, and all that antiquity had prescribed for “consecrations.”³ Later, Commodus did not consider this new divinity

¹ See the bust represented in Vol. V. p. 486.

² According to the inscription on his tomb, he held, at the close of the year 192, for the eighteenth time, the office of tribune (Orelli, No. 887). He had been made tribune for the first time on the 23d of December, 176. His fourth salutation as imperator is anterior to the month of August, 179 (Cohen, *Méd. impér.*). Lampridius says that in 183 he assumed the title of Pius, *Senatu ridente*, and that of Felix on the death of Perennis in 185.

³ Capit., *Anton. philos.* 18.

to be of sufficient rank, and preferred to be called the son of Jupiter rather than of Marcus Aurelius.¹

Commodus assumed the imperial power without opposition. He was advised to profit by the exhausted condition of the Barbarians to overthrow them completely. But the young nobles, wearied by these obscure combats in the Pannonian marshes, this dull life in rude camps, under hovels of mud and reeds, reminded him of the marble villas of Tibur, the games of the amphitheatre, and the seductions of the Via Sacra, until the young Emperor became eager to return to Rome and enjoy his palaces, his wealth, and the exercise of unlimited power. He waited, however, until his father's old generals had renewed the treaty which Marcus Aurelius had already imposed upon the Barbarians.² The Marcomanni and Quadi engaged not to approach nearer the Danube than forty stadia, to give up their arms, their auxiliaries,³ their captives, the deserters, and a certain quantity of corn, which tax Commodus afterwards remitted. They were forbidden to attack the Iazyges, the Burae, and the Vandals. They were accustomed to hold markets which the Roman traders frequented; but these markets being also the occasion for assemblages of their own people, when plots were concerted and oaths interchanged, they were forbidden to hold them more than once a month, or in places other than those designated by the Roman authorities; they were watched by centurions, and forts were constructed all along the river to prevent smuggling.⁴ A similar treaty was concluded with the Burae.

The Empire might at this time feel that its sway or its undisputed influence extended through the entire valley of the Danube, from the Black Sea to Bohemia, and that the Carpathians, with the mountains of Moravia, would be its secure barrier. But Commodus had relinquished the former right of making annual levies among these warlike tribes, that is to say, of taking their best warriors to serve in the Roman armies. Moreover, he gave back to them all the fortresses of which they had been deprived.⁵ From the summit of these walls the Romans had held the Barbarians in check,

¹ Herod. i. 14.

² See Vol. V. p. 486.

³ The Quadi surrendered 13,000; the Marcomanni, not as many.

⁴ Desjardins, *Monum. épigr. du musée hongrois*, No. 112.

⁵ Dion, lxxii. 2 and 3.

and had guaranteed the security of the colonists, who, protected by Roman swords, would finally have made of these lands another Dacia. But Commodus was not Trajan.¹



THE EMPRESS CRISPINA.²

This was the last time he appeared at the head of the troops. Happily the great traditions of war were not yet lost, and there remained to Rome such generals as Marcellus, Niger, Pertinax, Albinus, and Septimius Severus, who kept strong guard against the Barbarians.³

¹ Herodian (i. 15) speaks of large sums of money given to the Barbarians to buy peace.

² Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 44.

³ Dion and Lampridius mention some few victories gained over the Barbarians of the Danube by Albinus and Niger in 182 and 184. There were more serious engagements in Britain (184) and in Africa (187-190). Cf. Eckhel, vii. 120 and 123.

The Emperor came to Rome the 22d of October, 180, surrounded by all triumphal pomp in honor of victories that he had not gained, and instead of placing upon his chariot the statue of Marcus Aurelius, the true conqueror, he caused a handsome slave to sit at his side. Vice returned into the imperial palace, where, in the time of Marcus Aurelius, Virtue had dwelt.

Leaving the care of public affairs to Perennis, prefect of the guards,¹ Commodus plunged into amusement, and a part of the Roman aristocracy did likewise. The preceding Emperors had imposed severe morals on the court. Men now compensated themselves for this prolonged

CRISPINA AVGVSTA.²THE EMPRESS LUCILLA.³

restraint by rushing into all forms of dissipation, like the young French nobles after the hypocritical austerities of the latter years of Louis XIV. The ruler, at the age of ardent passions, propagated around him the vices which were in himself. Lately it had been the fashion to philosophize; now it appeared good taste to practise every kind of profligacy. It is said that the two Empresses set the example. One of them, Crispina, the wife of Commodus, was banished to Capri, under a charge of adultery, and afterwards put to death; the other, Lucilla, daughter of Marcus Aurelius, had retained imperial honors from her marriage with the Emperor Verus: at the theatre she sat with the Emperor's family, and in the streets the sacred fire was carried before her.⁴ Her father had compelled her to espouse in second

¹ Dion, lxxii. 9. According to Herodian, Commodus reigned wisely up to the time of the conspiracy of Lucilla, which is placed in 183. But this is probably a scholar's reminiscence of the quinquennium of Nero.

² Wife of Commodus (bronze medallion).

³ Daughter of Marcus Aurelius and wife of Lucius Verus. From an intaglio in the *Cabinet de France* (red jasper, 12 millim. by 8). The name of Proclus abridged, ΠΡΟΚΛΑ, is perhaps that of the engraver. Cf. Chabouillet, *op. cit.*, *Supplément*, No. 3,509.

⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus and Quintus Curtius say that the kings of Persia believed them-

nuptials the old and respectable Pompeianus, whom she, it is said, deceived, even including her own son-in-law in the number of her lovers. But Lucilla is perhaps one more victim of those calumnies so very current in Rome, according to the testimony of Tertullian, who heard them.¹ She must have been nearly forty at this time, — an age which, for women of the South, is no longer the period of beauty or of transient amours.

The writers who have preserved to us the history of this reign fill it with monotonous accounts of cruel executions. In the whole period of twelve years we find neither a good measure of government nor a rescript improving any law, nothing which shows any care for the public interest; Commodus did not even finish the constructions which his father had begun. Yet still the Empire stands by its own weight (*mole sua stat*). Traders buy and sell, sailors traverse the seas, laborers do their work, and governors keep watch over the provinces, as if a wise ruler presided over the destinies of the Empire. The treasury still furnishes funds to assist in the reconstruction of Nicomedeia, destroyed by an earthquake,² to construct a gymnasium at Antioch, divers monuments at Alexandria, and to establish at Carthage an African fleet (*classis Africana*), in order to make good with African corn the deficiencies in the Egyptian supply brought into Ostia.³ Lastly, the soldiers still are detailed to aid in public works. The troops in Dalmatia restore a bridge over the Cettina that had been destroyed; along the Danube they construct fortified posts to keep out German marauders.⁴ If our information were more extensive it would

selves to possess a fire which fell from heaven, which they kept alive with care, and had it borne before them on expeditions on little silver altars, surrounded by singing magi. The usage is ancient, for Herodotus makes mention of it. The Emperors are believed to have adopted this Oriental custom, as they did so many others, and this fire became a symbol of their majesty. The passage of Dion Cassius referred to shows that this custom was already established at the close of the second century.

¹ *Apol.*

² . . . πολλά ἐχαρίσατο (Malalas, *Chronogr.* xii. 289, ed. of Bonn). Antioch had bought in the year 44 from the inhabitants of Elis, for a term of ninety Olympiads, the right of celebrating the Olympic games, and expended for them yearly a sum amounting to nearly \$200,000; but these games were not regularly celebrated at Antioch until the reign of Commodus (Gibbon, chap. xxii.).

³ Lamp., *Comm.* 37. The oldest inscription mentioning the *classis nova Libyca* is of the time of Commodus (*Récueil de la Soc. archéol. de Constantine*, 1873, p. 460. See Ern. Ferrero, *Inscr. d'Afrique relatives à la Flotte*, in *Bull. épigr de la Gaule*, August, 1882).

⁴ Or-Henzen, Nos. 5,272 and 5,487: . . . *Claudianos latrunculorum transitus*.

show us the same labors carried on everywhere. Fénelon's remark in respect to the monarchy of Louis XIV., — that the old machine continued to move with the impulse originally given it, — might long be said of the Roman Empire.

Disquieting symptoms, however, are seen to appear. Under the feeble and violent hand that holds the reins, Roman discipline is relaxed through all the orders.¹ In the city riots break out; seditions announce the approaching reign of the soldiery; disorders springing up around the temples, a religious war; and the anarchy which will soon threaten the very existence of the Empire is manifested by the insolent success of a bandit pillaging with impunity many provinces. Lastly, the military spirit is growing feeble; senators desert those offices which involve actual service. One of them obtains from Commodus an exemption from military duty.²

On the frontier there is no important war during these twelve years. A Roman garrison permanently established on the Kour, in a fortress built in that remote region by Vespasian, kept the tribes of the Caucasus quiet and protected Armenia against them.³ Niger and Albinus, both destined for a fatal moment to enjoy the imperial power,⁴ seem to have been obliged to defend Dacia against the Sarmatians, and Gaul against the Frisii. In Britain, the Caledonians having broken through the line of Roman defences, Marcellus, a soldier of the old stamp, drove them back into their mountains; some similar outbreaks in Mauretania were repressed with equal promptness.

Commodus heard not even the echo of these remote sounds of war. To leave the care of public affairs to his praetorian prefect, and to send him his death-order at the faintest suspicion; to keep the children of the governors as hostages, that he might have nothing to fear from the provinces; and to make himself secure in Rome by granting all possible license to the praetorians, — it was to this that the Emperor had reduced the science of government. In regard to the finances, he had resumed the system of obtaining money by means of condemnations, — a capital sentence

¹ Spartianus, *Pescenn. Nig.* 10: *Commodi temporum dissolutio.*

² Orelli, No. 5,003; L. Renier, *Mélanges d'épigraphie*, pp. 12 and 20.

³ Inscription of 185 (*Journal asiatique*, 1869, p. 103).

⁴ Tac., *Ann.* vi. 20: . . . *Degustabis imperium.*

bringing with it always, in accordance with the oldest Roman laws, the confiscation of the property of the condemned person; or, as in the year 188, he announced that he was about to depart on a long journey, and, upon this pretext, drew from the public treasury whatever money he desired. Having taken these precautions, he abandoned himself freely to his passion for chariot-races, hunts, and the games of the amphitheatre.

Each of the tyrants of Rome had his favorite folly or dominant vice. Caligula thought himself divine; Nero, an incomparable singer; in this infamous band Vitellius was the Silenus,



COMMODUS ON HORSEBACK STRIKING A TIGRESS WITH HIS JAVELIN.¹

and now Commodus is to be the gladiator. Seven hundred and thirty-five times he fought in the arena: combats ruinous for the treasury, which paid twenty-five thousand drachmae for each of these royal performances,²—combats without peril to the Emperor, for every arrangement was made to secure that his imperial majesty should have nothing to fear from the swords of the victims or from the teeth or claws of the wild beasts, who were often brought out in their cages. Always surrounded by Moorish or Parthian archers, Commodus excelled in throwing the spear or javelin: one day a hundred bears fell by his hand. At each of these easy and

¹ Intaglio, 45 mill. by 55 (*Cabinet de France*, No. 2,096).

² This was to be paid from the funds appropriated for games; but that sum being quickly exhausted, the expense fell upon the treasury (*Dion*, lxxii. 19).

disgraceful victories the Senate applauded in chorus: "Thou art the master, thou, the first and most fortunate of men! Thou art conqueror and shalt ever be, Amazonius Victor!" But we know to what a sad condition the descendants of the men who once ruled the world were now reduced, — their continual terrors,



COMMODUS THE
OLYMPIAN.²

their shameful sycophancy in the presence of such rulers!¹ One only, Pompeianus, the son-in-law and friend of Marcus Aurelius, dared to protest against this degradation, refusing to appear in the amphitheatre or even in the Senate. Dion declares that he never saw him there except in the time of Pertinax. This knight of Antioch was the Cato of his time. Old Rome still gave her

stamp to some of her later children.

But how easy for a young ruler to be deluded by all this adulation! The Senate was not alone in exhausting the whole vocabulary of servility, the people, the army all do the same; and Commodus could hear the acclamations of the provinces answering back those of Rome. The young men of Nepete subscribe to build a monument to "Commodus the Victorious." A coin of Ephesus gives to him, as formerly had been given to Hadrian, the surname of Olympios,³ and an inscription calls him "most noble, most fortunate of Emperors." In another the offering is made to "the Roman Hercules." Accordingly, "the god"⁵ respects nothing upon earth: he deprives the months of their names, and gives them others of his own choosing; he changes even the names of Rome and Jerusalem, and calls them *Coloniae Commo-dienses*. His reign is the Golden Age, — at least, so his imperial letters are dated (*ex saeculo aureo*), and his birthday is to be celebrated throughout the whole Empire. But the festival is a holiday to



THE ROMAN HERCULES.⁴

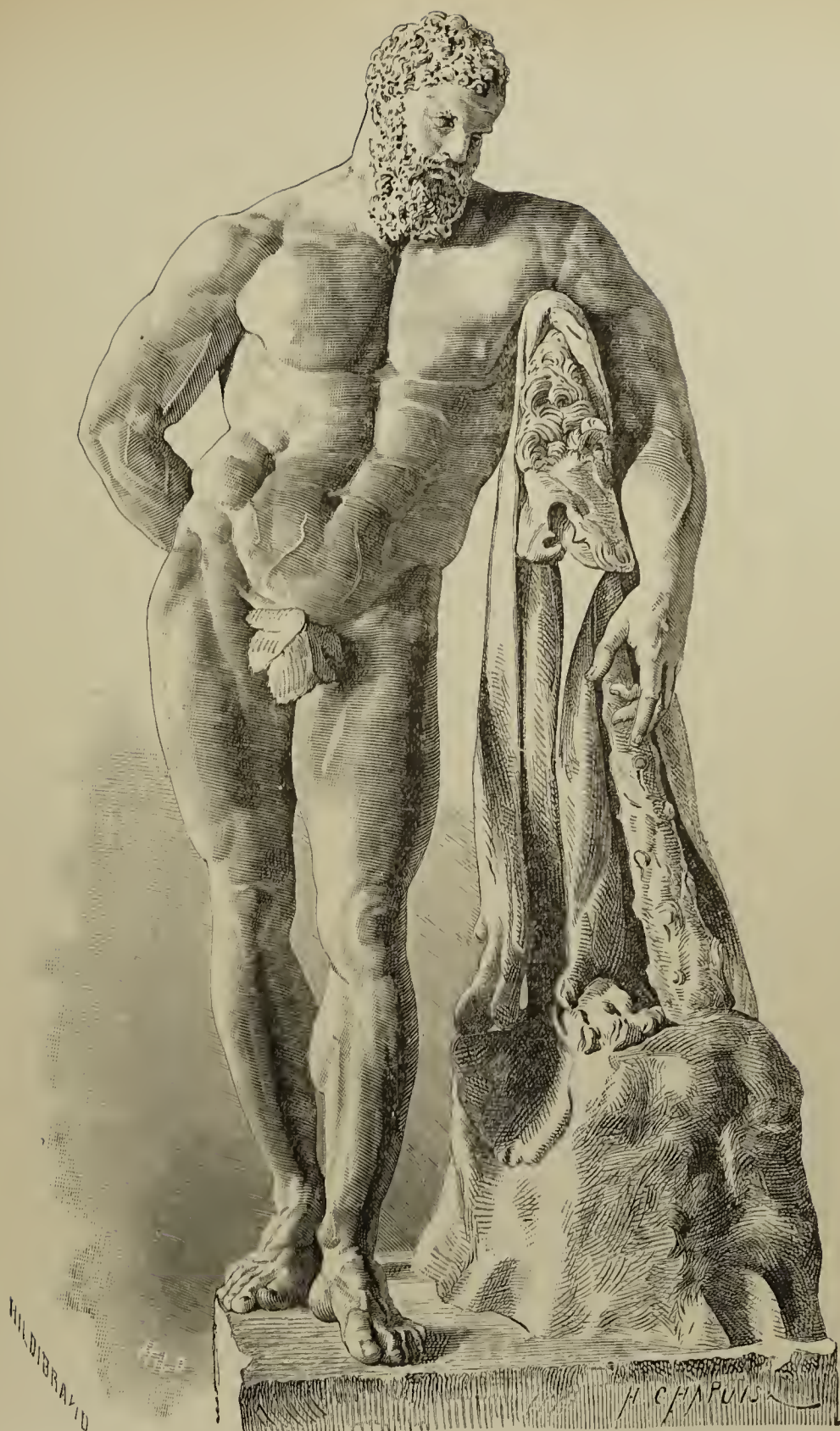
¹ See chap. lxxv. sect. iv. under what a reign of terror the senators lived.

² Bronze coin of Ephesus.

³ In respect to Nepete, see Orelli, No. 879: concerning Ephesus, Eckhel, vii. 136.

⁴ Reverse of a bronze medallion of Commodus.

⁵ *Ἐκκεῖτο καὶ θεός* (Zonaras, xii. 5). Renier, *Inscr. de l'Algérie*, No. 4,408; Orelli, No. 886.



HERCULES, KNOWN AS THE FARNESE, FOUND AT ROME IN THE BATHS OF CARACALLA (MUSEUM OF NAPLES).

himself only, for "on that day," Dion tells us, "we senators, our wives and our children, must each give him two aurei, and the decurions of all the cities must send him five denarii apiece."¹

His greatest ambition was to resemble the son of Alcmena, who to his mind was only the god of brute strength. There was carried before him in the streets the club and lion's skin of the conqueror of the hydra; in the amphitheatre they were laid on a gilded platform, and sometimes he used them. Dion relates that having collected a great number of maimed and infirm persons taken at random in the streets of Rome, he had them disguised to represent fabulous monsters with serpents' tails, and gave them sponges instead of stones with which to defend themselves when he attacked them with his club. He imagined him-



VEILED PRIEST DRIVING TWO OXEN.²



THE GOLDEN AGE UNDER COMMODUS.⁴

into the crowd that filled the amphitheatre. To keep this threat ever before the minds of the senators, he caused to be placed in the curia a statue of himself as Hercules,³ with bow strung in hand. "Never," says the historian, who was the witness of what he narrates, "did he appear in public without being stained with blood;" and Lampridius adds, "When he had mortally wounded a gladiator, he would plunge his hand into the wound, and then wipe the blood off on his hair." He was indeed a butcher.

Again we have an insane Emperor, in whom the intoxication of youth and power takes the form of blood-madness. Nero was not so bad as he, for in the case of that grotesque artist there was at least a spark of art, and his Babylonian entertainments, in

¹ lxvii. 19.

² COL(onia) L(ucia) AN(tonina) COM(modiana) P(ontifex) M(aximus) TR(ibunitia) P(otestas) XV., IMP(erator) VIII., COS(ul) VI. Reverse of a great bronze of Commodus.

³ The Vatican has a statue of Commodus as Hercules, of which there is in the Louvre a beautiful copy in bronze.

⁴ ΚΟΜΟΔΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΟΝΤΟC Ο ΚΟCΜΟC ΕΥΤΥΧΕΙ ΝΙΚΑΙΕΩΝ (*under the rule of Commodus all the world is happy*), legend surrounded by a wreath. Reverse of a bronze coin of Nicaea.

all their infamy, had a certain grandeur. The instincts of Commodus were always low, and his pleasures vulgar or hideous; and it is this which gave probability to the current story that his father was one of the heroes of the arena.

The populace is not over nice in the choice of its favorites. When it has the vote, violent declamations are its delight; when it has only the right to applaud, skill and physical force are what it loves. Accordingly, these exploits of the highway on the part of its Emperor, which scandalized reasonable men, enchanted the Roman crowd. They adored this man who lavished gold upon them and lived in the amphitheatre, who gave them another spectacle, the terror of the nobles, and from time to time, as an interlude, a dead body to drag through the streets. But the aristocracy were indignant at being made to tremble under a ruler who appeared to them singularly petty in comparison with the great Emperors who had preceded him. In the Senate there were no longer, as there had been during the first century, either republican rancors or patrician desires for power. Now it was well understood how indispensable to the Empire was a true emperor, what vigilance, skill, and firmness in the supreme rank were necessary to maintain, with the greatness of the Empire, the security of each and the true liberty of all. These sentiments showed themselves later when, to replace the last of the Antonines, the senators all agreed to lay the purple of the Caesars upon the shoulders of a freedwoman's son. As early as the third year of the reign of Commodus, a conspiracy, of which Lucilla was the soul, began in the palace itself. The Emperor doubtless kept at a distance this ambitious woman, — jealous, moreover, of the Empress, who deprived her of the first rank. She thought that by putting her son-in-law, or else Quadratus, a rich young senator who shared in her projects, in her brother's place, she should obtain a larger share of power. To be sure of success, she intrusted her son-in-law, who was an intimate of the Emperor, with the striking of the fatal blow. As Commodus passed through a dark passage-way which led to the amphitheatre, the assassin fell upon him with a poniard, crying, "This is what the Senate sends thee!" But he was disarmed before striking the blow (183), and his imprudent words cost many senators their lives. From that day the old friends of Marcus

Aurelius appeared to his son no longer silent censors, but enemies whose blows he must prevent. The palmy days of the informers came again, and murders seemed to have no end. Lucilla, her son-in-law, the latter's father, Quadratus, and many others perished. One of the praetorian prefects, Tarruntenus Paternus, a learned lawyer who has the honor of being placed among the juriconsults



SEXTUS QUINTILIUS MAXIMUS.¹

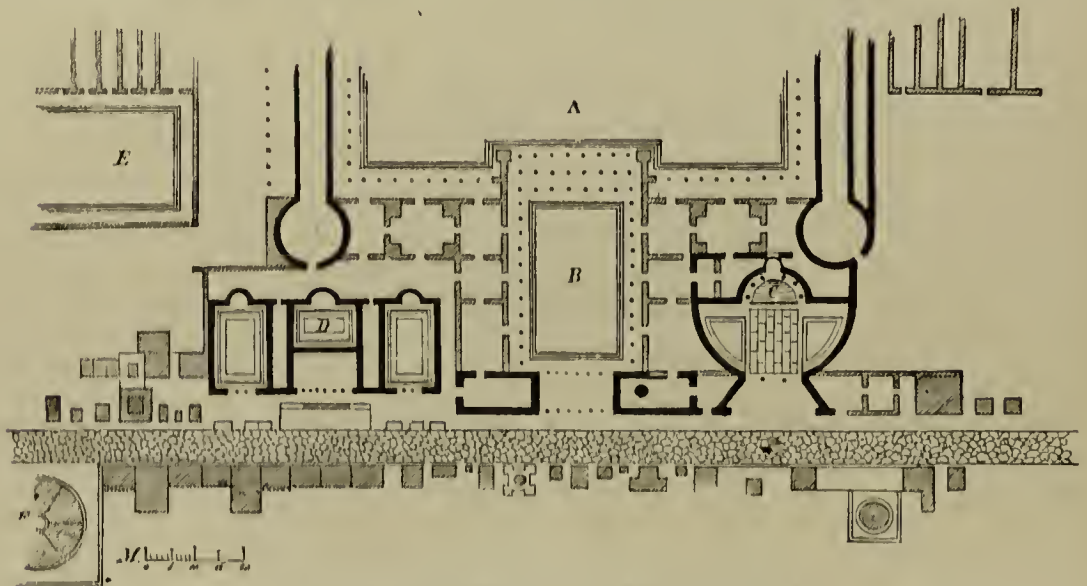
of the *Pandects*, could not be convicted of having shared in the conspiracy. But Perennis, his colleague, wished to be sole chief of the guard. He caused Paternus to be appointed senator, to remove him from the prefecture, and then accused him of treason. Paternus was condemned together with Salvius Julianus, the grand-

¹ The only bust known of any of the victims of Commodus. It was found in the ruins of the villa of the Quintilii, on the Appian Way. Cf. Henry d'Escamps, *Descript. des marbres du Musée Campana*, etc., No. 101. Paris, 1855.



RUINS OF THE VILLA OF THE QUINTILII (ROMA VECCHIA).¹

son of Hadrian's great juriconsult. This person was at the accession of Commodus in command of a large army, and much beloved by

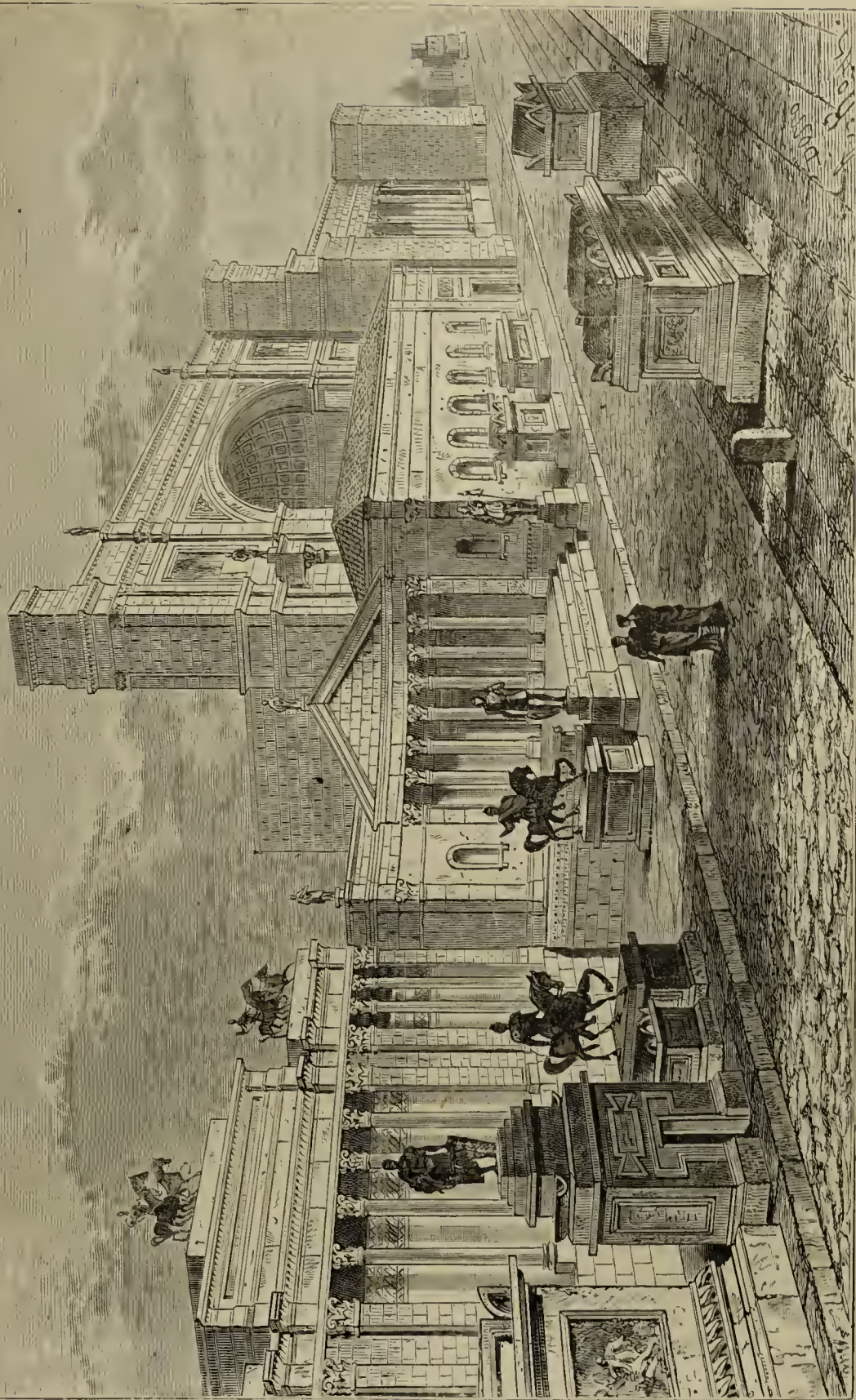


PLAN OF THE VILLA OF THE QUINTILII.²

his troops; he was not willing to dispute the Empire with the son of Marcus Aurelius, but he might have done so had he chosen. He

¹ From Canina, *La Prima parte della Via Appia*, pl. 33.

² A, peristyle; B, vestibule; C, nymphaeum; D, temple of Hercules; E, hot baths; F, tomb on the Appian Way (Canina, *op. cit.* pl. 32).



RESTORATION OF THE VILLA OF THE QUINTILII, ON THE APPIAN WAY. BY CANINA.

was esteemed dangerous, and this was enough to render him guilty. The list of the tyrant's victims is long; Dion says that of all who had enjoyed distinction in the state during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, three only, under Commodus, escaped with their lives. Like Caligula, he often took a man's life only for the sake of taking his property and relieving his own financial embarrassments; even many women perished on account of their wealth.

The fate of the Quintilii struck the imagination of contemporaries, habituated and hardened as they were to scenes of murder: they were two brothers of Trojan origin, famous for their wealth, learning, and military talents, and they were inseparable. The preceding Emperors, taking pleasure in honoring this fraternal friendship, had caused them to pass through the career of public duties together. They had been consuls, heads of armies, and governors of Achaia, one serving as lieutenant to the other; they both signed despatches, and Marcus Aurelius sanctioned this affectionate illegality, addressing to the two a rescript which may still be read in the *Digest*. Commodus also united them, but in death.¹ There still exist on the Appian Way the great ruins of their palace, called in the Middle Ages *Roma Vecchia*. Dion relates that, to save his life, the son of one of them, Condianus, had caused it to be reported that he was dead. Feigning to fall from his horse, he had himself brought home covered with blood, and while a ram was burned in his stead on the funeral pile, he made his escape and concealed himself. Many paid with their lives for their resemblance to the young Quintilius. After the death of Commodus a pretended Condianus claimed the rich inheritance. He was extremely well informed in the history of the Quintilii, and answered all questions pertinently. But Pertinax, formerly a teacher of grammar, confused the claimant by addressing him in Greek; whereupon it was decided that a man not versed in the language of Homer could not be a Quintilius.

During the war in Britain, Perennis had substituted knights for senators in command of the legions in that country. The soldiers, it was said, were offended that the distinction of the military grades should be thus impaired. This solicitude in

¹ *Digest*, xxxviii. 2, 16, sect. 4. *Domus Quintiliorum omnis extincta* (Lamp., *Comm.* 4). This writer gives a long list of the victims of Commodus.

the camps of Britain for the honor of the Conscript Fathers may well be doubted. Probably there were other motives of discontent. There is vague mention of a great sedition, appeased¹ by Pertinax after his life had been imperilled by it, and of some military favorite, Priscus, or Pertinax himself, whom the legions would have raised to power, but who refused the offer. Fifteen hundred soldiers were sent to bring the complaints of the army to the Emperor; Commodus, anxious at the approach of deputies so numerous that they seemed to bring commands rather than requests, went out of the city to meet them. "What is it, comrades," he said, "and for what do you come?" They rejoined that they had come because Perennis was conspiring against him, and had the design of making his son emperor. Without further information, the base Commodus gave up his faithful general.² He was beaten with rods, then beheaded, and his wife and sister and his two sons were put to death (185). The soldiers had unmade a minister; ere long they were to make and unmake emperors.

It is not clear where we ought to place the singular history of Maternus;³ Herodian relates it after the fall of Perennis. This soldier, together with some bold comrades, having deserted, scoured the country, pillaging the villages. His troop, with a regular military organization, and swelled by the addition of bandits and of convicts to whom he opened the prison doors, grew strong enough to attack cities, sacking and burning a number of them. He thus overran Spain and Gaul, pillaging and burning, and having nothing to fear from the municipal militia, which through long peace had fallen into inefficiency. The government was obliged to decide on sending regular troops against him. Maternus was no common bandit; he resolved to attempt a great achievement. Learning that preparations were on foot against him, he divided his band, gave his men orders to make their way into Italy by unfrequented routes, and directed them to meet him at Rome on

¹ Dion, lxxiii. 4, and Capit., *Pertinax*, 3.

² This is the testimony of Dion (lxxii. 12). Herodian (i. 24) relates the story differently. Instead of soldiers in Britain, they are legionaries in Illyria; and he says that a begging philosopher presented himself at some festival and denounced the intrigues of the prefect, who caused him to be burned alive.

³ Dion Cassius does not mention it, but Lampridius speaks of the *bellum desertorum* (Comm. 16), and Spartianus (*Nig.* 3) says of Niger that he was sent *ad comprehendendos desertores qui innumerè Gallias tunc vexabant*.

the festival of the Mother of the Gods. Upon that day disguises of all kinds were authorized. Maternus proposed to assume, with his men, the dress of the praetorians, and thus approaching the Emperor, to slay him and take his place. Being denounced by a fellow-conspirator, he was put to death with all those of his band who could be discovered.

We have no right to say that this audacious enterprise could not have been successful. In a state where there is between ambitious men and the sovereign power no strong and vital institution to shelter the ruler from a surprise, the thrust of a dagger may suffice to change a dynasty. These catastrophes we have already seen, and many more are yet before us in the history of Rome. In this regard the imperial dignity had a certain analogy with the priesthood of the temple of the Arician Diana, where the high-priest was bound to slay his predecessor.

The freedman Cleander, a porter who had become the chamberlain of Commodus, took the place of Perennis in the imperial favor. This man had retained all the vices of a slave, and added to them greed for gain. He sold offices, provinces, and judicial decisions; in one week there were several prefects of the guard, and as many as twenty-five consuls in one year.² With a part of this money he bought the Emperor's mistresses, and even the Emperor himself. The praetorians were soon to follow this example; but it was the supreme power itself which they offered for sale. Governments reap that which they sow.



DIANA OF THE VATICAN.¹

¹ Museo Chiaramonti, No. 122.

² According to Lampridius; but of this we have no other proof than his word, which is not sufficient.

Burrus, the brother-in-law of Commodus, attempted to enlighten the Emperor upon the unworthy conduct of his favorite. Cleander accused his enemy of aspiring to the imperial dignity, and obtained against him an order of death, which also included many senators. He then took for himself the prefecture of police, consenting, however, to share it with two colleagues.

This freedman, who has been called the minister of the dagger, might have continued with impunity to destroy the nobles; but he allowed the populace to go hungry, and they were the cause of his downfall. For some years there had been a condition of scarcity, the price of corn rose, and distributions were suspended. Commodus wished to compel the traders to sell at a lower price; but provisions were concealed, and the evil increased. An immense fire, like that in Nero's time, and an epidemic which in Rome alone carried off two thousand persons daily,¹ raised the public exasperation to the highest pitch. These scourges did not appear the result of natural causes, and the mob clamored for a victim. It was asserted that Cleander had hoarded wheat. We know the fate of those thus accused by the populace in times of scarcity. One day, in the circus, a band of boys rushed into the arena with loud outcries, headed by a virago of great stature and fierce aspect, who doubtless disappeared in the tumult, which gave the foolish crowd and the enemies of Cleander the occasion to say that some goddess had been the leader. To the boys' clamor was joined that of the spectators. The excitement became general, the games were abandoned, and the crowd rushed out of the city to the palace of the Quintilii, where the Emperor then was. To stop this multitude, Cleander caused them to be charged by the German or praetorian horse. Many persons were killed, many others wounded, and the great rabble turned back into the city. To disperse them completely, the cavalry followed them into the streets. Here, assailed by a shower of stones and tiles from the house-tops, attacked by the soldiers of the urban cohorts, who made common cause with the people, the troops fell back in disorder, upon which the crowd again turned in the direction of the palace, mingling cries of death to Cleander with expressions of affection for the Emperor. A con-

¹ Another had occurred in 182; cf. *Or.-Henzen*, No. 5,489. It would seem that the great plague which had ravaged Rome in the reign of Marcus Aurelius left behind it centres of contagion, whence it again appeared from time to time under Commodus.

cubine of Commodus made known to him the riot in the city, the danger that threatened himself, and the means by which it might be avoided. Commodus caused his favorite to be slain, and threw

COMMODUS.¹

out the body to the populace. For many hours the crowd bore through the city on the point of a spear the head of the all-powerful minister, and dragged the headless corpse through the streets. His son, a little boy brought up at court, had his brains dashed out on the pavement ; those who had shared the fortune of the favorite shared now in the ignominy of his death, and, after being the sport of the rabble, were dragged to the Gemonian stairs (189).²

¹ Marble bust found at Ostia (Vatican, *Braccio nuovo*, No. 121).

² Alarmed by this riot, Commodus gave some care to the provisioning of Rome, as is

On the last day of the games Commodus, before descending into the arena, had given his club to Pertinax. Later, men remembered this, and saw in it a sign. The expiation was drawing near. The son of Marcus Aurelius, whom his biographer calls “more



COMMODUS AND MARCIA.²

cruel than Domitian, more vile than Nero,” was a wild beast who could not fail some day to be stricken down. Among the possessions of one of his victims Commodus had found a woman to whom he attached himself passionately, making her his concubine. This union, a sort of morganatic marriage, recognized by the Roman world,¹ permitted Marcia to receive almost all the honors due to an empress.³ This woman, who seems to have possessed liberality of mind and determination, had gained an immense ascendancy over the weak soul of the imbecile buffoon; her medals, if we may believe them portraits, reveal a strong character, and we have seen with what energy she acted in the affair of Cleander. She was a Christian,⁴ in so far as this was possible for the mistress of Commodus; at least, she favored

proved by many medals representing him as Hereules, his right foot on the prow of a vessel, and extending his hand to Africa, who is holding out ears of corn, with this legend: *Providentiae Augustae*. Cf. Cohen, *Comm.*, at the Nos. 212, 213, 719, etc. We shall see that Septimius Severus kept very close watch over this supply.

¹ The condition of the concubine had not all the civil effects of *justae nuptiae*, but it did not incur the disgrace attached to illegitimate connections . . . *nec adulterium per concubinatum . . . committitur, nam, quia concubinatus per leges nomen assumpsit, extra legis poenam est* (*Digest*, xxv. 7, 3, sect. 1). It was really a kind of marriage, not suppressed until the time of Leo VI., the Philosopher. (Cf. Accarias, *Précis de droit romain*, i. 193–195.) It is possible that the children followed, as in the morganatic marriages of our time, the condition of the mother, and were not subject to the father’s *patria potestas*. The name of concubine had no disgrace attached to it. A widow in an inscription on her husband’s tomb calls herself *concubina et haeres* (Fabretti, *Inscr.* p. 337). Jumentarius furnishes a burying-place for his brothers, their children, *et uxoribus concubinisque* (Wilmanns, 330). Vespasian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius had had concubines before this time, and Constantius Chlorus and Constantine kept up the custom.

² Bronze medallion in the *Cabinet de France*.

³ All, Herodian says, excepting that the sacred fire was not carried before her. Capitolinus (*Max. jun.* 1) gives in detail the costume of a Roman empress.

⁴ . . . πολλά τε ὑπὲρ Χριστιανῶν σπουδάζσαι. This testimony of Dion is confirmed by the *Philosophumena* (ix. 12), who call her φιλόθεος, and relate that she sent a priest, the eunuch Hyacinthus, who brought her up, to deliver the Christian exiles of Sardinia. The measure seems to have been a general one. “Under Commodus,” says Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* v. 21), “we enjoyed a profound tranquillity.” (See chap. xc. *ad fin.*)

the Christians, who owed to her the tranquillity which they enjoyed during this reign. But in keeping the space around the throne vacant, these frenzied tyrants at last alienate even the instruments of their tyranny and of their pleasures. Marcia, Eclectus the chamberlain, Laetus the prefect of the guards, all felt themselves in danger. It may be that Commodus overheard some imprudent words; at least it is certain that he believed in the existence of a plot, which he called into existence, if it had not already been formed. Herodian relates in perhaps too dramatic a manner the last incident, which without doubt did but decide the day of execution.

On the eve of the Saturnalia Commodus formed the plan of going to pass the night in a school of gladiators, whence he would go forth in the morning for the day's amusement, armed from head to foot, and preceded by all his comrades of the arena. Vainly did Marcia and those about him urge him most strenuously to abandon the unworthy design; he dismissed them angrily, and to put an end to this opposition to his will he wrote upon tablets the names of the new victims who should perish on the following night, and placed at the head of the list Marcia, Laetus, and Eclectus. When he left his bedroom to go to the bath he placed these tablets under his pillow. A child, whose playfulness had amused the Emperor, and who had the range of the palace, entered this room, discovered the tablets, and took them away for a plaything. Marcia met him and read the fatal list; in all haste she warned those whom Commodus had thus assigned to her as accomplices. They determined that, after the bath, she should present to the Emperor a poisoned draught. She did so, but the effect was merely to produce vomiting; and upon this the conspirators caused him to be strangled by a young athlete (December 31, 192). His body, secretly removed from the palace, was hastily interred, and news was



MARCIA.¹

¹ From an engraved stone (amethyst, 18 millim. by 14) in the *Cabinet de France*. M. Charles Lenormant recognized Marcia in this intaglio, which was published by Mariette under the name of Sappho.

spread that Commodus had died of apoplexy. The Senate, who yesterday offered incense to him, now pursued his memory with all maledictions;¹ they proposed to declare him a public enemy and cast his body into the Tiber. To this Pertinax objected; but the statues of Commodus were thrown down, and in every direction were dragged through the streets, — those images representing him which were destined to be again set up, especially in Africa, after Severus had made him a god. He was thirty-one at the time of his death, — the same age as Nero; Caracalla was killed at twenty-nine; Caligula at twenty-eight; Elagabalus still younger, at twenty-one. Those who are really tyrants seldom live to grow old.

YOUNG ATHLETE.³

Too many atrocities are chargeable to Commodus for us to omit the one good thing that can be said of him, — he gave peace to the Christians, and released from prison those whom his father had incarcerated.²

From a more general point of view, his reign inaugurates a new period in the history of the Empire. It is the end of the good days, and the beginning of the days of misfortune. One single reign had sufficed to develop the fatal germ existing within the imperial monarchy; namely, the preponderating power of the army. This evil had already burst forth on the death of Nero, and had very nearly rent the Empire in pieces;

¹ The long enumeration may be read in Lampridius (18).

² See chap. xci. sect. 1. We read in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* v. 21): "Apollonius was accused by a minister of the devil in a time when this was not permitted. Perennis sent the informer to execution, but he also referred Apollonius to the Senate to make answer on the subject of his faith; and the latter, refusing to abjure, had his head cut off, because it was forbidden by law to release Christians who had been accused, unless they recanted." Thus the praetorian prefect punishes with death an accuser of the Christians, — which must have intimidated those who might have felt inclined to follow his example; but, Apollonius having publicly avowed his faith, the prefect punishes him according to the rescript of Trajan. This is certainly a novel kind of jurisprudence.

³ Statue in the Museum of Naples.

the firm hand of Vespasian, of Trajan, and of Hadrian had for the time repressed it. It broke out anew when an accident of birth or of public tumult brought to the head of the legions, instead of renowned and honored Emperors, a gladiator like Commodus, or a feeble and licentious Syrian like Elagabalus. From the day when the soldier clearly saw the disgrace of his ruler and the base servility of the Senate, the power of the government and of the civil law gave way.

In the camps, the near presence of the enemy kept up somewhat of the early discipline; but in Rome, amidst the seductions of the great city, the praetorians had formed many habits which implied a great deal of license. Pertinax alienated them when he forbade them to treat the citizens insolently. Commodus, on the other hand, whose sole defence they were against the nobles whom he was destroying, gave them fatal indulgence; and his distrust of the aristocracy obliged him to confer the praetorian command upon men of low birth, and even a freedman. These soldiers of fortune, in their turn, took precautions against the Emperor. They sought to make sure of their cohorts, and for this purpose formed them of men from whom they could ask anything, for the reason that they themselves refused them nothing. Into the ranks, once open only to Italians, and later to the bravest provincials, these generals now summoned the very Barbarians. The leader of the band who rushed into the palace of Pertinax was a Tongrian. Soldiers like these must have cared far less for the honor of the Roman name than for the advantages they could derive from the fear which they inspired. Accordingly, the Empire still stands firm; but in the presence of a Senate whom the ruler degrades, and of magistrates who have become powerless, a turbulent and rapacious soldiery will make, for the sake of gratifying their cupidity, revolutions ruinous to the provinces, and laying open the frontiers to the Barbarians. The military order will soon become superior to the civil. The Antonines had depended upon the Senate: their successors will rely upon the legions; and for a century all — with the exception of three only — will be the servants rather than the masters of the army. The officers in their turn will bow before the men who make emperors. And so the political power of the soldiery will have as its necessary consequence the

destruction of discipline, and, consequently, the ruin of the great military institution of Augustus and of Hadrian.¹

II. — PERTINAX AND DIDIUS JULIANUS (193).

THE murderers of Commodus made haste to choose an Emperor, Publius Helvius Pertinax, an old general, who appeared to have preserved to advanced life² vigor enough to make it certain that the excesses of youth would not now be followed by the feebleness of old age. Laetus led him to the praetorian camp.

Noted for his severity, Pertinax could not be pleasing to soldiers who regretted Commodus; but they had no candidate at hand for the imperial dignity, so that between the ruler who could no longer do anything for them, and the one who promised them a *donativum*, they resigned themselves to the change that had taken place. As for the populace, they had applauded Commodus, and they now hailed Pertinax; it was one show and one largess more.

In the case of Commodus, we had an Emperor's son; in the case of Pertinax, we see the rise of a man of the lower ranks. The son of a freedman, a charcoal-dealer at Alba Pompeia in Liguria, Pertinax had at first attempted to gain a livelihood as a teacher of grammar; not succeeding very well at this, he asked and obtained, through the favor of a patron, the rank of centurion. His merit raised him rapidly to the first rank in the army, and so to the highest in the state. He became prefect of a cohort in Syria, commander of a squadron in Britain and in Moesia, commissioner superintending the distribution of alimentary pensions along the line of the Aemilian Road;³ later, he became chief of

¹ "At this epoch," says Herodian (ii. 24), "began the corruption of the soldiers. From this time they showed an insatiable and shameful cupiditv and the greatest contempt for the Emperor."

² He was sixty-six years of age (Zonaras, xii. 7).

³ This office of *proc. ad alim.* filled by Pertinax, which we find indicated in many inscriptions (e. g. Or-Henzen, Nos. 3,190, 3,814, 6,524, and No. 1,456 of the *C. I. L.* iii. 235, *proc. ad alim. per Apul. Calabr. Luc. et Bruttios*, for a contemporary of Alexander Severus and Gordian III.), proves that the alimentary institution of Trajan was still in full vigor as late as the middle of the third century; but it was interrupted under Commodus (Lamp., *Comm.* 16), and Pertinax found arrears of nine years which he could not pay (Capit., *Pert.* 9).

the flotilla of the Rhine, collector of tribute in Dacia, with a salary of 200,000 sesterces, legionary tribune, senator, praetor, legate of a legion which distinguished itself under his authority in Rhaetia and Noricum, and, lastly, consul. The services which he rendered the government at the time of the rebellion of Cassius against



THE EMPEROR PERTINAX.¹

Marcus Aurelius had given him the command of the army of the Danube, and after this the government of the two Moesias, of Dacia, and of Syria. Thus at the age of fifty-four he had filled a variety of public offices and had administered four consular provinces. His talents do not, however, appear to have been remarkable, and this rapid advancement proves only that the road to honor was open to all who knew how to pursue it.

¹ Colossal marble bust found at Pozzuoli (Museo Campana. H. d'Escamps, *op. cit.* No. 102).

He had not seen Rome since his appointment to the Senate.



COIN OF PERTINAX.¹

When he returned thither he was reproached with having gained great wealth in his various employs. He had not conceived it his duty to ruin himself in the public service, and a strict economy had doubtless sufficed to bring him to

fortune.² We may mention two facts to his honor,—he kept his mother with him in his various promotions, and on erecting some fine buildings in his native city, he had the shop of his father, the charcoal-dealer, inclosed within one of them.

Perennis caused him to be sent into exile; but Commodus on that prefect's death recalled Pertinax and put him at the head of the turbulent legions of Britain. Later the Emperor appointed him to watch over the provisioning of the city (*praefectus frumenti dandi*), gave him the proconsulship of Africa,³ and, as the highest honor, the urban prefecture. By nature Pertinax was honest, destitute of ambition, and somewhat penurious, as is the case with those who have made their fortunes slowly; but he was devoted to the public welfare, and would have been one of the best of rulers if he had been allowed to live, or if he had known how to defend himself.



PERTINAX LAUREL-CROWNED.⁴

The imperial power alarmed him; he had no relish for it.⁵ In the Senate he offered the Empire to Pompeianus, who had been the patron of his early years,⁶ and to Glabrio, who was reputed a descendant of Aeneas; but these men were wise enough to leave to him the burden and the perils. A few days later another

¹ IMP. CAES. P. HELV. PERTIN. AVG. Laurelled head. On the reverse: AEQVIT. AVG. TR. P. COS. II. Equity standing, holding a balance and a cornucopia. Gold coin.

² Herodian (ii. 3) says that he was poor. His mother died while with him in Lower Germany, where her tomb was long to be seen (Léon Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.* p. 272).

³ In this province he had, according to Capitolinus (4), to repress many seditions caused *exactionibus earum quae de templo Caelestis emergunt*.

⁴ Great bronze.

⁵ *Horruisse illum imperium epistola docet*. Capitolinus, who speaks of this letter, makes the mistake of not giving it to us; and this is the more to be regretted since Julian in *The Caesars* accuses Pertinax of having been "the accomplice, at least in thought, in the conspiracy whereby the son of Marcus perished."

⁶ In respect to Pompeianus, cf. L. Renier, *Inscr. de Troesmis*, p. 5.

senator venturing into the midst of the praetorians, the soldiers proposed to make him emperor. Scarcely escaping from their hands, his toga torn to rags, he sheltered himself in the palace of Pertinax, and then, more surely to escape the imperial power, fled from the city. Such instances of reluctance reveal a situation full of anxiety.

Pertinax refused for his wife the title of Augusta¹ and that of Caesar for his son. "When he has deserved it," the father said, "it will be time enough to give it to him."¹ All his own relations and servants continued in their humble condition; he gave up his own property to them, and remained simple in his habits of life. At news of his accession his compatriots from the Ligurian mountains, a rapacious race, hastened to Rome in crowds to draw profit from this fortune; but Pertinax sent them away as they came. He had the same duty to fulfil that had devolved upon Vespasian; namely, to restore order to the state, to the magistracies which had suffered from so many arbitrary appointments,² to the finances so completely ruined by mad prodigality that in the treasury he had found on his accession only a million sesterces remaining. To procure the money for which the soldiers and the people clamored, he sold his predecessor's favorites at auction, the accomplices or the victims of his debauchery, — quite a harem; also the weapons of Commodus, his garments of silk and gold, his valuable furniture, and a thousand curiosities, among which we note carriages with a movable seat which turned easily in all directions, and also marked the hour and the distance passed over. Pertinax confiscated the property of the buffoons, made the freedmen disgorge their ill-gotten gains, and drove out of the palace all useless persons. The parasites who, under Commodus, had lived at the Emperor's table, could not forgive what they called the "meanness" of the new Emperor, and slandered him incessantly.

¹ At Metz an inscription has been found giving the title of Augusta to the Emperor's mother, and that of Caesar to his son (Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.*). These provincials believed that things had gone on as usual at Rome, and allowed themselves a flattery which they were sure would not be displeasing. Inscriptions bearing the name even of Pertinax are rare. One has lately been discovered in Africa: *Divo Helvio Pertinaci*; it belongs to the time when Severus called his father *Divo Pertinaci Augusti patri*.

² Under Commodus many had been *adlecti inter praetorios*. He obliged them to take rank after those who had really acted as praetors (Capit., *Pert.* 6). He doubtless made the same regulation in respect to the other magistracies, thus restoring order in the Senate.

So immense were the resources of the Empire that less than three months of strict and economical administration enabled Pertinax to fulfil half of his promises to the praetorians,¹ to pay many public debts, and resume the works of public utility which had been suspended under Commodus. He removed many of the hindrances to commerce; he exempted from taxes for ten years those who should cultivate the deserted lands of Italy; and restored security by the rehabilitation of the victims of Commodus, the recall of exiles, the condemnation of informers, and the protection accorded to citizens against the insolence of the soldiery.

But this order, this economy, suited neither the praetorians nor the populace. Pertinax had ventured to forbid the former to carry weapons in the streets,² or to be insolent towards passers-by; he had said to them: "Many disorders have appeared in our time; with your aid I propose to correct them;" and his first password had been: *Militemus*, "Let us be soldiers." In these words the soldiery had discerned an intention to bring them back to the early discipline and to warlike duties. In the case of the populace, Pertinax had suppressed the distribution of corn, which from the time of Trajan had been granted to children over nine years of age. Lastly, he showed himself disinclined to be guided by Laetus, who regarded this distrust as a presage of disgrace, and at once began intrigues among the praetorian cohorts. A conspiracy was originated, or at least Falco, an ex-consul, was accused of aspiring to the Empire. The Senate was about to condemn him, when Pertinax interposed, and swore that no senator should be put to death during his reign. A slave having accused many praetorians of complicity in the designs of Falco, Laetus caused them to be put to death, throwing upon the Emperor the odium of the execution. Being ill-paid, and feeling themselves objects of suspicion, these troops resolved to rid themselves of a parsimonious Emperor and of all anxiety for their own lives. Three hundred repaired in arms to the palace. There were guards enough there to have driven back this handful of insurgents; but the servants of the palace, whom Dion calls the Caesarians, impoverished by their master's economy, opened the gates to the assassins. Pertinax believed that he could stop them by

¹ *Promisit duodena millia nummum, sed dedit sena* (Capit., *Pert.* 15).

² . . . μήτε πελέκεις φέρειν μετὰ χεῖρας (Herod., ii. 4).

going out unarmed to meet them. The sight of the Emperor did indeed produce a momentary effect; many had already sheathed their swords, when a Tongrian soldier rushed upon the Emperor and wounded him. Immediately all hesitation was at an end; all struck at him, and his head, borne on a spear, was carried out to the praetorian camp. Eclectus alone had endeavored to defend his master, and perished with him. Pertinax had reigned eighty-seven days (28th of March, 193).

There was in Rome at this time a senator by name Julianus,¹ of great wealth and noble lineage, for he was descended from Hadrian's great jurisconsult, and had been brought up in the household of Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus Aurelius. He was a man of small mind and puerile vanity, to whom life had taught nothing. He had filled, however, not discreditably the highest offices in the state, governed many provinces, defeated some German tribes, and at a time of life which should have been for him the age of wisdom, sixty years, suffered himself to be dragged to the abyss by the ambition of his wife, the haughty Manlia Scantilla, who was eager to see her husband's laticlave changed for the imperial purple.



MANLIA SCANTILLA.²

Although the Empire had been often bought, it had not as yet been publicly put up at auction: Rome was now about to witness this disgrace. To tranquillize the praetorians, Pertinax had sent out to their camp his father-in-law Sulpicianus, who was the prefect of Rome. This senator again was one of those commonplace persons who, ignoring the obligations of power, see only its glitter. When the head of Pertinax was shown to him, he at once proposed to the murderers to buy of them the imperial purple which had just been dipped in the blood of his son-in-law. The rumor of this spread quickly, and Julianus hastened to enter the

¹ Marcus Didius Severus Julianus (*C. I. L.* vol. vi. No. 1,401).

² Wife of Didius Julianus. Bust in the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 47

lists as his rival. Then began a most extraordinary and unparalleled scene. Julianus was on the top of the wall, Sulpicianus was in the camp, and the two bid against each other. Messengers passed between the wall and the camp, saying to the former: "He offers so much; what will you give?" And to the latter, "The other goes higher; will you go higher still?" They went as far as 5,000 drachmae, or 20,000 sesterces; and the offers being equal, the soldiers waited, sure to get more in the end for their commodity. Finally, Julianus routed his adversary by a bold advance of 1,250 drachmae. He cried the sum from the top of the wall; he counted it on his fingers, that those who could not hear might see; and he threw down to them his tablets, on which he had written that he would rehabilitate the memory of Commodus, while Pertinax would unquestionably be avenged by Sulpicianus. The latter dared not go farther. Each praetorian was therefore to receive by this bargain about \$1,150. "There had been a time when the Senate had proclaimed the sale of a piece of ground which was part of the territory of the state: it was the field whereon Hannibal was encamped."¹ We may well find this scene disgraceful; but we must admit that the *donativum*, whose origin we have seen, was a practice from which no Emperor could escape. The odious feature is not the sum, but the auction: Marcus Aurelius gave almost as much;² and among nations who are very free, who are even very proud, men buy a portion of power, not from the praetorians, it is true, — who, happily, no longer exist, — but from the electors.

The decision being made, the soldiers brought a ladder so that the purchaser might come down inside the camp and receive the oaths of his new guards, and also the imperial insignia. They caused him to appoint two praetorian prefects chosen by themselves, after which they opened the gates, and with standards displayed and in order of battle conducted to the Senate their new leader, whom they presented under the name of evil omen, Commodus. They took the precaution, however, to make him swear that he would bear no ill-will towards his competitor; it

¹ Chateaubriand, *Études historiques*.

² Twenty thousand sesterces. See Vol. V. p. 460, and for the value of the sesterce, p. 266, note 4. Now, the 1,250 drachmae of Julianus are only 5,000 sesterces more.

was wise not to discourage those who might be tempted to renew this honorable traffic.

Many senators trembled, among others our historian Dion, who had often had occasion to sue Julianus in court. They loved Pertinax, and considered his successor ridiculous, and were shocked at the bargain which had just been concluded. But all the approaches to the curia, and even the senate-house itself, were filled with soldiers. The senators hastened to welcome the new Emperor, to admire his foolish speeches, and to lavish upon him the wonted acclamations. Julianus finally went up to the palace; there finding the supper which had been made ready for Pertinax, he ridiculed the simplicity of the repast, ordered another to be prepared, and played with dice within a few steps of the spot where lay the dead body of his predecessor.¹ But from the morrow on, came to him the terrible cares of a disputed authority, and but a few days later the anguish of a near and inevitable death.

He had made no promises to the people, who were wounded in their dignity by this offensive neglect. When he presented himself on the following day in the curia, the crowd received him with loud outcries, calling him usurper and parricide. He took matters easily at first, and assured them that he would give them money. "We will have none," they cried, filled with unwonted disinterestedness; "we will not accept it!" Upon this he ordered the troops to disperse them, and many were wounded; the others fled, and took refuge in the circus. Dion asserts that they remained there all night and through the following day, invoking the gods, and—which was more to the point—the military leaders, especially Pescennius Niger, or the Black, who was at this time far away in Syria. They were let alone, and the feeble riot subsided.

Meanwhile the imperial mint issued coins representing the new ruler with a laurel wreath and the lying inscription, *Rector orbis*, while others had the legend, *Concordia militaris*; but of



REVERSE OF A COIN
OF JULIANUS.²

¹ Spartianus represents him as frugal and thoughtful; but at the end of his account speaks otherwise. Herodian confirms Dion, whom he often copies.

² This coin bears the legend: *Rector orbis*. Large bronze.

the world, all that Julianus possessed was merely the space on which stood the palace in which he had just taken up his residence, and the "military concord" existed only against him. The legions



CONCORDIA MIL-
ITARIS.²

of the frontiers had just learned how much profit could be derived from the election of an emperor, and they did not propose to leave to the praetorians all the advantages of this lucrative traffic. Very strong armies, each consisting of three legions, occupied Britain, Upper Pannonia,¹ and Syria, under the famous generals Albinus, Severus, and Pescennius Niger.

When news came that within three months two Emperors had been assassinated, and that a third had bought the Empire, there was a general movement of disgust towards the Senate who had accepted all this. This feeling showed itself especially in the camps of the Danube, where Pertinax had commanded and had left an honorable memory.



CONCORDIA MILI-
TARIS.³

Then recurred the scenes that had taken place on the death of Nero. Two of the armies — those of Pannonia and Syria — proclaimed their generals (April, 193), and the



DIDIUS JULIANUS,
LAUREL-CROWNED
(BRONZE).

third would have done the same had not Severus skilfully negotiated with Albinus. While Severus made sure of the neutrality of the army in Britain he also gained the assistance of the legions who were in his own neighborhood, so that in a few days he found himself possessor of nearly half the military strength of the Empire.⁴ His cause, therefore, was already gained when he

set out for Rome, preceded by the declaration that he was coming

¹ Spartianus (*Sev.* 4), Herodian (ii. 33), and Borghesi (*Œuvres compl.* v. 368) represent Severus as governor of both Pannonias; but Dion, who commanded in Upper Pannonia, gives him only this province, and speaks of but three legions as under his orders. If he had had the two Pannonias he would have had four legions.

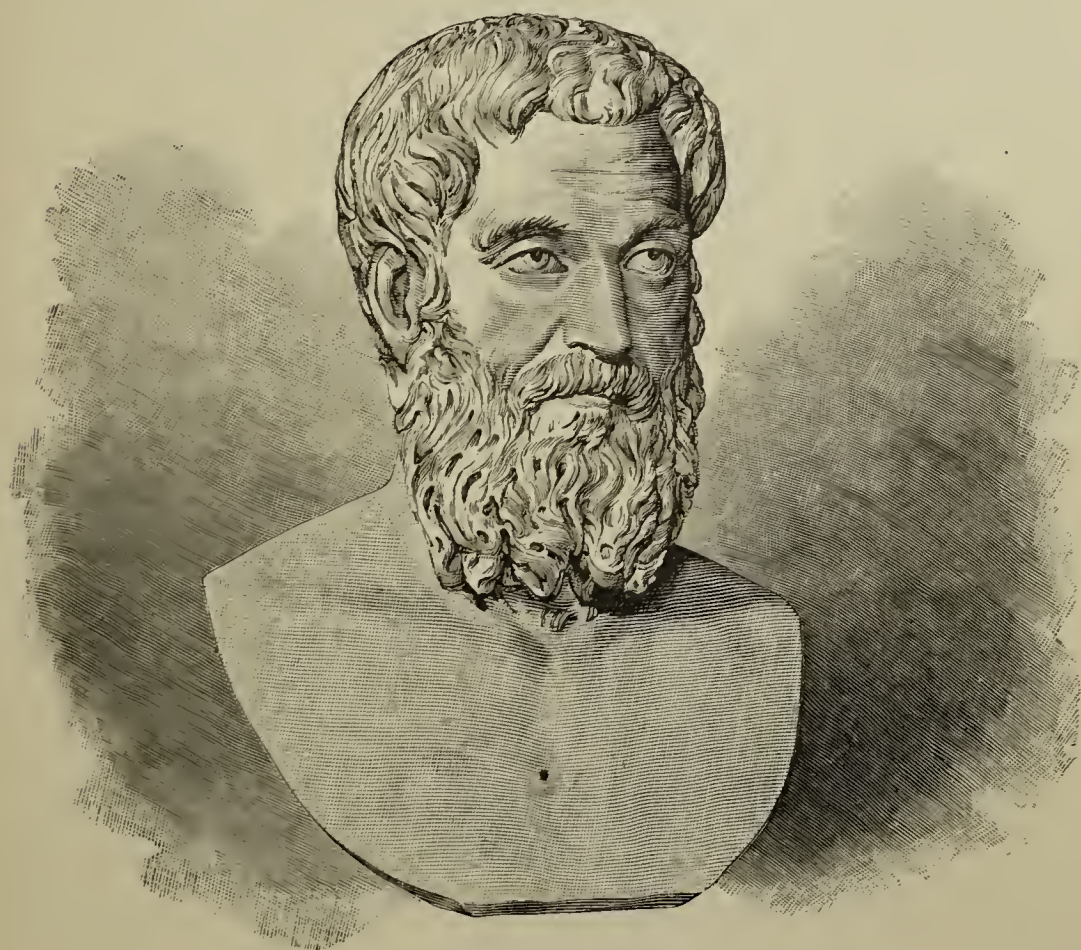
² CONCORD. MILIT. Concord standing between two standards. Reverse of a gold coin of Didius Julianus.

³ Reverse of a large bronze of Didius Julianus.

⁴ "The fourteen legions who proclaimed Septimius Severus, and to whom the new Augustus gave the *donativum*, were the ten legions guarding the Danube and the four legions on the Rhine" (Robert, *Les légions du Rhin*, p. 46). M. de Celeuneer (*Essai sur la vie de Sévère*) counts sixteen legions. Spartianus says (*Sev.* 5) that it was necessary to urge Severus (*repugnans*). He doubtless borrowed this word from the Emperor's autobiography.

to avenge Pertinax.¹ Secret emissaries had withdrawn his children from the city before the news of his elevation to the imperial power could reach there.

Julianus caused him to be declared a public enemy by the Senate, and at once began preparations to receive him. Laborers were set at work digging a moat around the city; the gladiators



PESCENNIUS NIGER.²

from Capua were called in,—mere bandits, on whom no reliance could be placed; the soldiers from the fleet at Misenum were sent for, who made themselves ridiculous by their awkwardness in handling the javelin; and the elephants of the circus were armed for war, but very unsuccessfully, as they threw off the towers which were placed on their backs. Julianus even caused the palace to be barricaded, in sign of the desperate resistance he should still

¹ . . . *Excipiebatur ab omnibus quasi ultor Pertinacis* (Spart., *ibid.* 5; cf. Herod., ii. 9, 10). He even assumed the name of Pertinax, which we find on many of his inscriptions. Cf. L. Renier, *Mélanges d'épigr.* pp. 180 et seq.

² Bust of the Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 292.

make to the enemy if an entrance should be effected into the city. The praetorians ought to have set him the example; but they were rich, habituated to an indolent life, and employed substitutes to do their tasks for them, while they insulted the people, whose terror they were.¹ As a pledge of the maintenance of his alliance with them, Julianus put to death Lactus and Marcia, the murderers of Cominodus. At the same time he consulted the magicians, sacrificed children as victims, and despatched assassins to Severus,² senators to entice away his troops, and the praetorian prefect to Ravenna, to put in a condition of defence this outpost, where the fleet of the Adriatic was stationed. But Severus was on his guard, and advanced rapidly. Proclaimed at Carnuntum (near Vienna) on the 13th of April, he was obliged to employ ten or twelve days in negotiating with the legions of Upper Germany and in putting his army in motion. However, he arrived in the neighborhood of the capital before the 1st of June; so that his troops must have



COIN OF DIDIUS JULIANUS.³

made, from Vienna to Rome, in less than seven weeks, a distance of two hundred and sixty-six leagues, or six leagues and a half a day without intermission. This rapid march of a numerous army suddenly taking the field proves the abundance of provisions that agriculture and commerce could bring together at a moment's notice, the good condition of the roads, and the subjection of the provinces; that is to say, the prosperity and calm of the Empire during the storms of Rome. It proves also the discipline maintained by Severus in these legions upon which he could impose such fatigues, without exciting a murmur of discontent.

This rapidity baffled all resistance. Severus crossed unopposed the Alps, the Adige, and the Po, entered Ravenna before the prefect sent from Rome had reached that city, and obtained the adherence of the Senate's deputies. Thus Julianus saw the narrow limits daily growing narrower in which he was still permitted to live and reign.

The last news overwhelmed him. Anxious, irresolute, he sought

¹ Dion, lxxiii. 16; Spart., *Did. Jul.* 5.

² . . . *Aquilium centurionem notum caedibus ducum miserat* (Spart., *Pescenn. Nig.* 2).

³ IMP. CAES. M. DID. IVLIAN. AVG. Laurelled head. On the reverse: RECTOR ORBIS. Julianus standing, holding a globe. Gold coin.

advice, but the Senate would give none ; he offered the Empire to Pompeianus, who replied, "I am too old, and my sight is too weak." Reduced to the miserable hope of conciliating his formidable adversary by begging for his life and a share of the power,



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.¹

he proposed, like Vitellius, that the Vestals should be sent to meet Severus, and that the latter should be at once appointed his colleague.²

¹ Bust of marble with alabaster chlamys found at Rome under the church of St. Francis of Assisi (Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 50).

² He also bestowed all honors upon the maternal grandfather of Severus (Dion, lxxiii. 17).

The Conscript Fathers hastened this time to defer to his wish, and he sent to the new Augustus the Senate's decree by the hand of one of the praetorian prefects, who was suspected of meditating assassination under a show of friendliness. But the decree was scornfully rejected, and the bearer of it put to death.

Meanwhile, to avoid making Rome the scene of a sanguinary conflict, as in the time of Vespasian, Severus prepared a movement there in his favor. He wrote to the magistrates; he sent edicts which were publicly posted; he named a prefect of the praetorian guard, whom the trembling Julianus acknowledged; and he made known to the praetorians that he would pardon them if they would surrender the murderers of Pertinax. As base as their Emperor, the guards at once seized the three hundred and came to tell the consul Messala that their comrades were in chains. This was the end. "Immediately," says Dion Cassius, "Messala called us together and made known to us what the soldiers had done; upon which we decreed the death of Julianus, and gave the imperial power to Severus and divine honor to Pertinax." Julianus was killed in his bed, saying only: "What wrong have I committed?" (2d June, 193.) He had held the Empire sixty-six days,¹ and did not deserve to retain it longer. It was already too much that he should have inscribed his name on the list of Emperors. History must in its turn execute justice upon these adventurers who wish for power only that they may enjoy it; ambition without ability is a crime.²

III. — SEVERUS; WARS AGAINST ALBINUS. NIGER, AND THE PARTHIANS.

ONCE more we have a man upon the imperial throne! But, harsh to others and to himself, this man will make good his name by his inexorable sternness, an administrator of justice after the fashion of Tiberius and Louis XI.

¹ Dion, lxxii. 17. Zonaras (xii. 7) says sixty. Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the *Chronicle* of Eusebius represent him as killed in battle at the Milvian bridge, — which proves great lack of the critical faculty on the part of these historians.

² This is the expression used by Chateaubriand in reference to a person mentioned in his *Mémoires*.

Since the extinction of the family of the Caesars we have seen upon the throne Italian, Spanish, and Gallic Emperors; at last comes the turn of the African. Lucius Septimius Severus was born at Leptis, April 11, 146, in a family which had long been decorated with the honors of the Equestrian order, though without abandoning the province where lay their property and their influence, and where their renown had begun. One of its members, however, had acquired notoriety enough at Rome in the time of Domitian to be celebrated by Statius in his verses.¹ But this Severus, quite another man from ours, is called by the poet "the gentle Septimius." Until his fourteenth year the future Emperor remained in Africa, studying Greek and Latin literature, without forgetting his native tongue, whose accent he retained through life, so that Rome was about to have an Emperor speaking the language of Hannibal.² Of this Severus was not at all ashamed; the great Carthaginian was his hero, and he erected a marble statue in honor of the African general. Very credulous, like all his contemporaries, in the matter of presages,



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS IN CUIRASS.³

¹ *Silv.* iv. 5.

² Tzetzes, *Chil.* i. 27. The Emperor's sister could with difficulty speak the Latin language, *vix latine loquens* (Spart., *Sev.* 15), and his son Caracalla caused many pictures of Hannibal to be made (*Herod.* iv. 8).

³ Statue in the Museum of Munich.

Severus was also very resolute to put himself in a condition to respond to the advances of fortune,¹ which is the best way of making dreams come true.

At Rome he studied law under an eminent jurisconsult, Q. Scaevola. The gravity of his character appeared in the affection he conceived while attending this famous school for a fellow-student, who was destined later to eclipse the master. The tie was lifelong, and Papinian's friendship protects, in our minds, the memory of Severus. Three of his uncles had been consuls, and one of them obtained for the young man the office of quaestor, and so an entrance into the Senate (172). The career of public honors was thus opened to him at the age of twenty-seven. We shall not follow him in it; this *cursus honorum* is already familiar to us, and we are interested only in the ruler. We need only notice that in 189 he was *consul suffectus* under Commodus.

While Julianus was dying in Rome, Severus was approaching the city. The Senate sent out a hundred of its members to meet him at Interamna, twenty leagues from Rome, and renew to him their oaths of fidelity.

He received them surrounded by six hundred of his most faithful troops, who had the duty of keeping watch upon suspicious persons. Introduced into the centre of this menacing band, the deputies were obliged to submit to search, that it might be made sure that they had no concealed weapons. After this affront, each of them, it is true, received a present of eighty pieces of gold (over \$350); but this first interview between the Senate and the Emperor did not inaugurate a reign of mutual confidence, and it will be seen that the rivals of Septimius always found partisans among the Conscript Fathers.

The murderers of Pertinax had been already beheaded; the other praetorians Septimius ordered to come and meet him at a designated place, where the legions of Illyria silently surrounded them, while another band went by unfrequented roads to take possession of the real citadel of imperial Rome, the intrenched camp between the Viminal and Colline gates. Thus having them in his power, he ascends his tribunal; he reproaches them angrily

¹ *Omnibus sortibus nactus* (Spart., Sev. 2). He was accused during the reign of Commodus of having consulted the Chaldaeans to know whether he should succeed to the Empire (*Ibid.* 4).

for their perfidy towards the late Emperor, then orders them to lay down their arms¹ and accoutrements, even to their military belts. These useless soldiers, just now so vain in their splendid array, who had so often brought terror to Emperor and Senate and people, were thus conquered without the striking of a blow. Degraded amidst the derision of the legionaries, mocked by the people, who saw these formidable warriors reduced to their mere tunics, they escaped as best they could to places of refuge. Penalty of death was pronounced against any who, after a certain number of days, should be found within the hundredth milestone from Rome, and some took their own lives, from shame.

The praetorian cohorts were disbanded. But Severus quickly reconstituted them out of different material. Up to his time they had been recruited chiefly from Italy;² he decreed that, as a reward for military services, picked men from all the legions should be enrolled as praetorians. This was a wise measure; the body-guard of modern sovereigns is thus made up. Since for more than a century the provinces had given Emperors to Rome, it was natural that they should also furnish praetorians. Severus employed the new cohorts in all his wars; but he left them the character of a permanent garrison of Rome, and so the danger remained the same. We shall see that he augmented it, indeed, by raising the number of the praetorians to forty thousand.

“At the city’s gates,” says Dion Cassius, “Severus dismounted from his horse, and laid aside his military dress before entering Rome; but his whole army followed him into the city. It was the most imposing sight I ever saw. Throughout the city were garlands of flowers and laurel-wreaths; the houses, adorned with hangings of different colors, were resplendent with the fire of sacrifices and the light of torches. The citizens, clad in white, filled the air with acclamations, and the soldiers advanced in martial order, as if at a triumph. We senators headed the procession, wearing the insignia of our rank.”³

Meanwhile emissaries of the new ruler, scattered through the

¹ That is to say, the short sword which they wore at the right side; their fighting arms they had left in the camp, in the *armamentarium*.

² Also they were drawn from Spain, Macedonia, and Noricum (Dion, lxxiv. 2).

³ Dion, lxxiv. 1. This writer, of more value for this reign than for those preceding it, is now our principal authority. Gibbon has yielded too much to the temptation of employing Herodian’s rhetoric in adorning his History.

crowd, related all the signs that had been given him of his approaching honors. Soldiers are fatalists, and have need to be so. Severus firmly believed in presages; but he especially wished men to believe in those which were favorable to himself. In his *Memoirs*, which are lost to us, he related with complacency the celestial signs, the dreams and oracles which had predicted his fortune; and he caused them to be represented in pictures which he exhibited in Rome, in order to show the world that the gods themselves had announced, and therefore had decreed, the advent of the new imperial dynasty.

Dion is right in representing to us the entry of Severus into Rome as a triumph. It was in fact the definitive victory, and this time the open victory, of the military power; but to the honor of Severus it was a victory unaccompanied by tears. A small number of guilty persons were the only victims.¹



FUNERAL PILE OF PERTINAX (LARGE BRONZE.)

The character of the new reign was soon revealed. Vainly did Severus show himself very civil towards the Senate,² declare that he should take Marcus Aurelius and Pertinax for his examples, and solemnly promise that he would never put to death a member of the high assembly; the license of the soldiery proved what these words were worth. Feeling that they were the conquerors of the day, they treated Rome like a conquered city. They established themselves in the temples and palaces and under the porticos as if in taverns, taking from the shops whatever they wanted, and when called upon for payment drawing their swords. While Severus, surrounded by his armed friends, was haranguing the Conscrip Fathers in the curia, the soldiers with shouts and threats came to demand from the Senate ten thousand sesterces apiece. This was what the soldiers of Octavius had received, and the army now felt that they

¹ Spartianus says (*Sep.* 8) that the friends of Julianus, accused in the Senate by Severus, were despoiled of their estates and put to death. Dion says only: τοὺς μὲν χειρουργήσαντας τὸ κατὰ τὸν Νερούαν ἐργὸν θανάτῳ ἐξηπάσαντες (lxxlv. 1), and speaks of no further executions until those of the civil war. It was probably at that time that the senator Julius Solon perished (*Ibid.* 2).

² Civil he almost always was, at least in words. In the case of a *relatio* which he made later to the Senate on a question of law, he said: *Cui rei obuiam ibitur, patres conscripti, si conueneritis* (*Prægm. Vatic. juri Rom.* of Cardinal Mai, No. 158). Hühner (*De Senatus populari Romano actis*, pp. 75 et seq.) gives the chronological list of the Emperor's communications to the Senate.

had won a second battle of Aetium, and merited a like recompense. Much as Severus had already given them,¹ he was with great difficulty able to content them with a thousand sesterces apiece.

A few days later, funeral honors were paid to Pertinax. Severus had ordered a shrine to be erected to his predecessor,



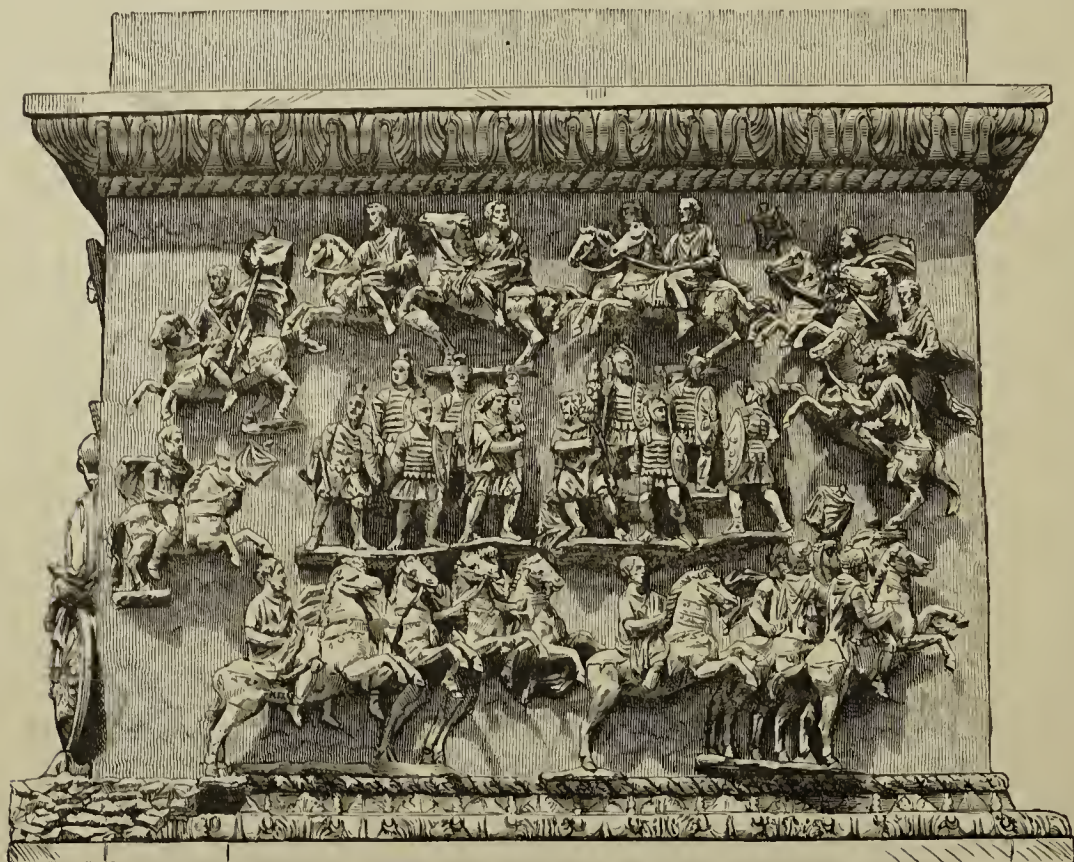
PERTINAX DEIFIED.²

that he should have a statue of gold in the circus, and that in all prayers and oaths his name should be invoked. In the Forum an edifice was constructed with a peristyle adorned with ivory and gold, in the centre of which, on a couch covered with tapestry of purple and gold, was placed the image of Pertinax arrayed in triumphal robes. As if he had only been asleep, a handsome

¹ Spart., *Sev.* 5.

² Statue in Pentelic marble, on which the antique head is set (Museum of the Louvre, Clarac, No. 466).

young slave kept away the flies from the waxen face with a fan of peacock's feathers. "The Emperor and we the senators, with our wives, all arrayed in mourning garments, seated ourselves around this building, the women under the porticos, we in the open space; and the procession began to move. First were carried



PROCESSION OF THE KNIGHTS AT AN EMPEROR'S FUNERAL.¹

the figures of Romans venerated since the earliest times; then followed choirs of boys and men singing a funeral hymn; then were carried bronze busts representing all the conquered peoples in their national costumes; then the busts of those who had distinguished themselves by their discoveries; then the standards of corporations;² the infantry, the cavalry, the horses of the

¹ Bas-relief from the Antonine Column, representing the procession of the knights at the funeral of Antoninus (Vatican).

² . . . ἀνδρῶν . . . οἷς τι ἔργον ἢ καὶ ἐξεύρημα ἢ καὶ ἐπιτήδευμα λαμπρὸν ἐπέπρακτο . . . καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ πόλει συνστήματα (Dion, lxxiv. 4). This singular passage will be noticed, and the presence in this procession of corporations or trades; these two phrases confirm what we have said of the importance of the humble trades at Rome. In the triumphs of Gallienus and Aurelian in Rome, in the entry of Constantine into Antun, the *collegia*, preceded by their banners (*rexilla*), had their place in the procession (Ilist. Aug., Gall. 8, and Aurel. 34; *Panegyrici veteres*, viii. 8: . . . *omnium signa collegiorum*).

circus; and lastly a gilded altar adorned with ivory and precious stones.

“After this imposing procession, Severus ascended the rostra and read a eulogy on Pertinax, which we frequently interrupted with our acclamations. At its close we repeated our applause, mingled with sobs and groans. The magistrates in charge then took up the funeral bed and gave it to the knights to carry it into the Campus Martius, where the funeral pile had been prepared. Some of us walked in advance; some smote upon their breasts; others sang a funereal chant to the sound of flutes. The Emperor came last.

“The funeral pile, in the form of a tower of three stories, adorned with gold, ivory, and statues, bore on the top a gilded car driven by Pertinax. The bed having been laid upon the funeral pile with all that is usually placed near the dead, the Emperor and the relatives of Pertinax kissed the waxen image. Then the magistrates with their insignia, the equestrian order, the cavalry and the infantry, defiled past the spot (*decursio*); then the consuls applied the fire, and an eagle, escaping from the flames, rose into the skies. Thus Pertinax was raised to the rank of the immortals.”¹

Dion is a poor writer, but we have borrowed from him this page as representing the customs of the time. We remark that at imperial funerals the senators represented the hired mourners of humbler obsequies. This grave Roman people took pleasure in cries and gestures, a violent expression of grief or joy, even if neither grief nor joy were sincere; and Italians of the present day in this respect resemble their ancestors.

Of the new Emperor's two rivals, Albinus and Niger, one had been kept inactive by deceitful promises, and the other, at the head of nine legions and numerous auxiliaries, had been acknowledged by Roman Asia, and in the Greek cities was coining money with Latin legends promising him victory and eternity (*Aeternitas Augusta* and *Invicto Imperatori*).² He had even set foot in Europe by the occupation of Byzantium, and his troops were marching upon Perinthus. Respect for adversaries was not a vir-

¹ Dion, lxxiv. 4 and 5. Cf. the account given by Herodian (iv. 3) of the funeral of Severus.

² Eckhel, vii. 154, and Cohen, iii. 213 and 217, Nos. 1 and 26.

tue of the ancients; the rival Emperors insulted each other like Homeric heroes before the combat. "He is only a mountebank of Antioch," Severus said of his rival. But in reality he valued



PESCENNIUS NIGER,
LAURELLED.¹



THE AUGUSTAN
ETERNITY.²



THE INVINCIBLE
EMPEROR.³

the other's abilities very highly,⁴ and considered him a formidable adversary. Niger, in fact, a soldier of fortune, had passed through the military grades, meriting the praise of Marcus Aurelius, of Commodus, and even of Severus himself. He was a vigilant guardian of discipline. On one occasion he condemned two tribunes to be stoned who had secured profit out of the commissariat department,⁵ and had it not been for the entreaties of the army he would have beheaded some soldiers who had stolen a fowl. On another occasion his legionaries demanded wine. "You have water," he said to them, "is not that enough?" Never under his command



SAECULO FRUGIFERO.⁶

did the soldiery require wood, or oil, or forced labor from the people of the provinces. In Rome, where men remembered that he was an Italian, Niger found partisans,⁷ and his affable manners had made him popular wherever he had held command. Dion doubtless ascribes to the crowd his own sentiments and those of a portion of the Senate when he shows the people, after a quarrel with the soldiers of Julianus, calling Niger to the aid

¹ Gold Coin. ² Reverse of a denarius of Pescennius Niger: a crescent and seven stars.

³ Reverse of a silver coin of Pescennius Niger; legend: INVICTO IMP. TROPHAEA, surrounding a trophy.

⁴ Spartianus (*Nig.* 4 and 5) asserts that during an illness at the beginning of the war, Severus wished, if he should die, to have Niger for his successor, and that, after his first successes, he offered the latter *tutum exilium si ab armis recederet*.

⁵ See, later, the letter of Severus to Celsus. Spartianus also gives a letter from Marcus Aurelius very honorable to Niger.

⁶ "To the Fruitful Age." Felicity, standing, holds a caduceus and a cornucopia. Reverse of a large bronze of Albinus.

⁷ Spart., *Nig.* 3; *ibid.* 2: . . . *Romae fautum est a senatoribus*. His father had been *curator* at Aquinum. He himself had begun his career by the rank of centurion.

of the Republic. In any case, one good sword was of more value than all the wishes of the people-king, and if they expressed any on this subject, they did but irritate Severus without being of use to Niger. Indolence has been ascribed to the governor of Antioch and the effeminate Syrian provinces; but even before his rival had quitted Rome, the prompt and well-judged measures of Niger had secured to him Asia and Egypt, had opened Europe, had guaranteed the neutrality of the Armenians, the succor of the Arab princes and chiefs of Mesopotamia, and even alliances beyond the Tigris.¹ He had not, therefore, in the delights of Daphne, forgotten the terrible part which he had resolved to play.

Severus had directed his lieutenants to organize resistance in Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, and a legion sent into Africa guarded for him that granary of Rome. However, he had not a moment to lose; and so, thirty days after his entrance into Rome, he quitted the city, "to reduce to order the Oriental provinces," leaving behind him a distrustful Senate, but a people glutted with feasts and rejoicing in an abundant harvest.³ For more than a month his troops had been on the march towards the Propontis. They arrived in time to save Perinthus and drive the enemy back into Byzantium, which was at once blockaded by Marius Maximus.⁴ Negotiations opened by



LIBERALITAS
AVGVSTA.²

¹ The Parthian king had promised aid, the king of Atrah had sent him archers, the Adiabeni and some independent tribes had declared for him (Spart., *Sev.* 9; Herod., iii. 1).

² Gold coin; Liberalitas bearing a *tessera* and a cornucopia (Cohen, iii. 253). Reverse of a coin of Septimius Severus.

³ For this same year, 193, we have coins of Albinus and of Niger with the legend: *Saeculo frugifero, Cereri frugiferae*.

⁴ Upon the question whether this Marius Maximus should be identified with the historian of that name so often quoted in the *Augustan History*, see Borghesi, v. 475; Henzen, No. 5,502; L. Renier, Spon's ed., p. 397; and for the opposite opinion, Budinger, *Untersuchungen zur röm. Kaiserg.* iii. 30-33. The lieutenant of Severus commanded with the title of *dux* a corps drawn from the legions of the two Moesias. This title, which we meet for the first time under Hadrian, a title which in the time of the Gordians made part of the official hierarchy, designates not an imperial legate at the head of the legions of his government, but a general intrusted with the command of a special expedition, and having no other *imperium* than that which he exercised over his soldiers. Cf. Borghesi, v. 462. Under Marcus Aurelius, Candidus, another lieutenant of Severus, had been *praepositus copiarum* (Orelli, No. 798, and vol. iii. p. 78). Two other inscriptions, in Gruter (p. 389, 2), and in Marini (*Iscriz. Alb.* p. 50), give the title of *dux* to Tib. Cl. Candidus and to L. Fabius Cilo in the time of Septimius Severus. No earlier mention of this title is known (L. Renier, Spon's ed. of 1858, p. 299. Cf. Henzen, *Annali*, xxii. 40). The principal lieutenant of Niger

Niger having failed,¹ the rest of the army crossed the Hellespont in the fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, and it does not appear that Niger disputed their passage. A victory was gained by them near Cyzicus, and then a second in the neighborhood of Nicaea, in which engagement Niger commanded in person.

Five centuries earlier, Alexander had gained a victory near this spot, making himself master of Asia Minor. The double defeat of Niger now threw him back, as Darius had been driven after the battle of the Granicus, across the Taurus.



PESCENNIUS NIGER.²

In the gorges of the mountains he constructed intrenchments at the Cilician Gates which he believed would be impregnable; but a torrent, swollen by a violent rain, made a breach, through which the Illyrians entered. In a third action, near Issus, the Asiatic legions, notwithstanding the advantage of number and of position, could not sustain the onset, and lost twenty thousand men. Niger fled to Antioch, and was proposing to seek an asylum among the Parthians when he was seized and beheaded. His head, carried into the

camp before Byzantium, was exhibited to the besieged; but the sight did not intimidate them (194). As in almost all engagements between the legions of Europe and Asia, the latter were conquered.

Severus seems to have been absent from all these battles, not through fear, but through confidence in his generals, and doubtless in order to remain within reach of couriers from Gaul and Italy, who might bring him news of some storm gathering in the West.³

was the proconsul of Asia, Asellius Aemilianus, who was killed at Cyzicus (Dion, lxxiv. 6. Cf. Waddington, *Fastes des prov. asiat.* p. 245).

¹ He demanded a share of the Empire; but Severus would grant nothing except *tutum exilium* (Spart. *Nig.* 5).

² Engraved stone (red jasper, 31 mill. by 22). *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,099. In the upper part an altar; in the midst of flames, the serpent of Aesculapius. In the field, two inscriptions, thus interpreted by Charles Lenormant: "To Aesculapius, Julius Sabinus, diviner, has consecrated (this stone), for the health of the Emperor Caesar Caius Pescennius Niger, the Just." The intaglio is, therefore, an *ex-voto*. Cf. *Trésor de Numismatique*, *Icon. rom.* pl. xli. p. 75, and Chabouillet, *op. cit.* pp. 272-273.

³ He seems to have remained for some time at Perinthus, a city well selected under the

Many Eastern cities involved themselves in this civil war for the purpose of gratifying those local feuds and inveterate jealousies to which all history bears witness. Thus Nicaea, Laodiceia, Tyre, and Samaria took sides with Severus, because Nicomedeia, Antioch, Berytus, and Jerusalem had declared for his rival. In Palestine the Jews and Samaritans fought with one another fiercely. In the West Albinus will find a hundred and fifty thousand Britons, Gauls, and Spaniards to follow his fortunes, while others will follow the fortunes of Severus.



COIN OF THE
COLONY OF
LAODICEIA.¹

Thus it happened whenever the imperial authority was divided. Without Rome and a unity of command, the world would have fallen back into chaos, — a truth never to be lost sight of, for it is the justification of the Roman Empire in history.

Niger being overthrown, his partisans were punished and his adversaries rewarded, after the customary procedure and in the spirit of all ages. Antioch, which had struck coins in honor of the Asiatic emperor, lost her privileges and her title of metropolis, which Laodiceia inherited for the entire reign of Severus.² This city, Tyre, Heliopolis, or Baalbec, and others, obtained the titles of colonies, with the *jus Italicum*.³ Severus however pardoned the Jews who had declared for Niger;⁵ but Nablous lost its citizenship, while Samaria obtained the rank and privileges of a Roman colony.



COIN OF ANTIOCH WITH THE NAME
OF PESCENNIUS NIGER.⁴

circumstances, whence he could keep watch at once over Europe and Asia. Cf. Eckhel, ii. 41; iv. 440.

¹ SEP(timia) COL. LAVD. METRO(polis), in four lines, surrounded with a wreath of olive-leaves. Reverse of a bronze coin of Laodiceia under Geta.

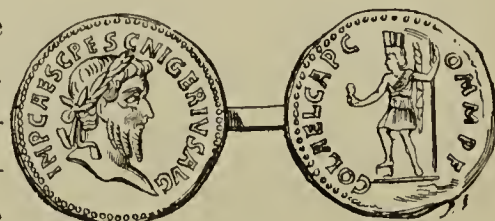
² Eckhel, iii. 200. According to Malalas (*Chronogr.* xii. 294), he authorized the inhabitants of Laodiceia to take his name, Septimius; he made them very great largesses, instituted gratuitous distributions, παρέσχεν αὐτοῖς σιτωνικὰ χρήματα πολλά, constructed in their city a hippodrome, a cynegion, hot baths, a hexastoon, and gave the senatorial laticlave, ἀξίας συγκλητικῶν, to all of their most notable citizens who survived, ἀξιωματικοῖς.

³ *Digest*, l. 15, 1.

⁴ AVTOK. KAICAP̄ Γ. ΠΕΚΚΕ. ΝΙΡΡΩ Δ, around a laurelled head of P. Niger. On the reverse: ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ ΘΕΩΝ, *the Providence of the gods*, and an eagle. Silver coin.

⁵ *Palaestinis poenam remisit* (Spart., *Sev.* 14). Coins are extant of Caesarea and Jerusalem bearing the name of Niger. Cf. De Sauley, *Numism. de la terre sainte*.

The siege of Byzantium, which lasted about three years,¹ has remained as famous in history as are those of Tyre and Carthage, of Rhodes and Jerusalem. Dion describes the massive walls of the city; its towers furnished with formidable engines; its harbor closed by a chain and also made secure from attack by the current of the Bosphorus; lastly, its ships with double rudder, which, changing direction without turning around, fell suddenly upon the Roman galleys, from which they had appeared to flee, and broke them with their beaks. The superiority of defensive warfare was at that time so great that this city, surrounded by a numerous army and threatened by all the fleets of the Empire, could not be taken by assault; it was necessary to wait until famine forced these brave men to lay down their arms. A great number perished in attempting to escape at the last; the remainder, having fed on all possible food, and even human flesh, opened the gates. The chiefs and soldiers were butchered, the walls broken down, and Byzantium, reduced from its rank of a free city, became a mere village in the territory of Perinthus. A fellow-countryman of Dion, the engineer Priscus, had directed this gallant defence. He was, like the rest, condemned to death; but Severus pardoned him to attach him to the Roman service.



COIN OF JERUSALEM WITH THE
NAME OF PESCENNIUS NIGER.²

The friends of the claimant shared therefore in his misfortunes, as they would have done in his success. Niger would not have been more clement, for after the battle of Cyzicus he had ordered his Moorish cavalry³ to sack the cities which had declared for his antagonist. But Severus, still faithful to his oath, put to death none of his enemies who were of senatorial rank,⁴ but con-

¹ From the middle of 193 to the spring of 196.

² IMP. CAES. C. PESC. NIGER IVS(tus) AVG. surrounding the laurelled head of Pescennius Niger. On the reverse: COL. AEL. CAP. COMM(odian) P(ia) F(elix). The genius of Aelia Capitolina Commodiana (Jerusalem), bearing in the right hand a human head. Bronze coin (De Saulley, pl. v. fig. 7). Coins of Tarsus and Aegae, in Cilicia, prove that these cities also took the name of Commodus.

³ We have still the epitaph of a Sidonian killed in this "war of the Moors." Cf. De Saulley, *Deux inscr. de Saïda*.

⁴ Τῶν δὲ δὴ βουλευτῶν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπέκτεινε μὲν οὐδένα (Dion, lxxiv. 8). Spartianus

tented himself with confiscation and a sentence of exile. Others, who had furnished money, paid a fine of fourfold the amount. Dion accuses Severus of having revived the trade of the informers and of having condemned the innocent. The historian's text,



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.¹

extremely mutilated in this place, does not permit us to discuss this fact, which indeed would not have surprised a people habituated by long usage to political retaliations. But another conclusion may be drawn from the following incident. Cassius Clemens, a senator,

(*Sev.* 9) says that only one perished; but as he copies indiscriminately the information which his reading furnished him, he contradicts himself three times in one passage.

¹ Bust found at Porto d' Anzio; Capitol, Corridor, No. 3.

being called before the tribunal of the Emperor, said in his defence: "I knew neither you nor Niger; finding myself in his party, I yielded to necessity, not for the purpose of fighting against you, but of dispossessing Julianus. I therefore was pursuing the same object as you. If, later, I did not abandon the chief whom the gods had given me, neither would you have wished that any one of those who now surround you as my judges should have abandoned you and gone over to your rival. Examine the matter in itself. Your decision against me will be a decision against yourself and your friends; for posterity will say that you made it a crime in us to have acted as you yourself have done." Severus, admiring his courage, deprived him of but one fourth of his property, — a partial justice which appeared a great indulgence. During the struggle he had been heard to say that he would pardon Niger if the latter would anticipate defeat by an abdication; and it is possible he might have kept his word, for he contented himself after the victory with exiling from Rome the wife and children of his rival, and he respected the statues of Niger and their ostentatious inscriptions. "If these praises be just," he said to those who advised him to efface them, "and they are so, it is well to let men know what an enemy we have conquered." Lastly, he granted an amnesty to the soldiers, and restored to their homes a great number of them who had taken shelter with the Parthians. Severus was not therefore always the pitiless man he is represented in ordinary history. He ended by even granting favors to that city of Byzantium which had so long held his fortune in check. Its site was too remarkable for an intelligent ruler to leave it long in ruins.¹ He aided in rebuilding it, erected baths, a temple of the Sun, another of Artemis, an amphitheatre, a hippodrome, etc., "being scrupulous," says an old writer, "to buy from their owners the houses or gardens he required in his new buildings."² He granted them aid from the army treasury, and permitted the city to take the name of his son. Up to the time of Caracalla's death Byzantium was called the Antonine city.³

¹ . . . *Situmque loci amoenum contemplatus, Byzantium instauravit* (*Chron. Alex., ad ann.* 195, and Malalas, xii. 291, edit. of Bonn).

² . . . ἀγοράσας οἰκήματα (*ibid.*). Malalas and the *Chron. of Alexandria* perhaps go too far in one direction; Dion goes equally far in an opposite direction when he affirms (lxxiv. 14) that Severus confiscated the lands of the inhabitants, — which cannot be true, since he did not send a colony to it, and yet Byzantium continued to exist.

³ ἡ πόλις Ἀντωνινία (Hesychius Miletus, in C. Müller's *Frag. Hist. Graec.* iv. 153).

The stern judge of the allies of Niger became the benefactor of subjects returning to their allegiance.

Philostratus¹ gives another proof of his spirit of justice, and it was a citizen of Byzantium who profited by it. The siege of the city was still in progress when one of its inhabitants, a famous actor, merited at the Amphictyonic games the prize for tragic declamation. The judges dared not give it to him, and the matter was reported to Severus, who ordered the prize to be conferred. The matter is a trifle; but among the ancients an act of justice like this was not of common occurrence.



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, ON A COIN OF SMYRNA.²

During the siege of Byzantium, Severus had regulated the affairs of Syria and punished the people of Osrhoene, although they boasted of having murdered the fugitives of Issus, who had taken refuge with them. The Empire kept up a few garrisons on the farther side of the Euphrates. To strengthen in these countries the imperial authority, which had been somewhat impaired by the civil war, and to punish the allies whom



NO. 1. GOLD COIN.³



NO. 2. BRONZE.³

Niger had found there, the Emperor led his legions into Upper Mesopotamia, where, since the great expedition of Cassius in 165, no Roman army had appeared. He sent his generals still farther, and they easily got the better of the Arabs and Adiabeniens on the two banks of the Tigris. It was for his interest to smother the noise of civil war by the resounding clamor of victories gained

¹ *Vitae Soph.* ii. 27.

² AV. KA. CE. CEOVHPOC II. (Autocrator Caesar Septimius Severus Pertinax). Laurelled bust of Septimius Severus. On the reverse: EΠΙ ΤΡΑ. ΚΑ. ΤΡΑΤΩΝΕΙΚΩΝ CMVΠNAION (Under the Strategus Claudius Stratonicus, coin of the people of Smyrna). Turreted Cybele seated, the left elbow resting on the tympanum, holding in the right hand two figures of Nemesis; at her feet, a lion. Bronze (Mionnet, No. 1,342).

³ Coins commemorative of victories over the Parthians, Arabs, and Adiabeniens. Captives at the foot of a trophy, with the legend: PART. ARAB. PART. ADIAB. COS. II PP. The bronze coin has, as usual, the signature of the Senate: S. C. (Cohen, No. 537.)

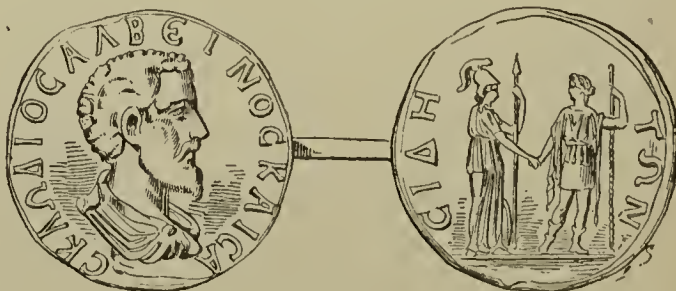
in foreign lands. But he was too prudent to go far into these remote regions until he had regulated the affairs of the Western provinces. He himself went no farther than Nisibis, a stronghold which the Parthians had given to the Jews, who were numer-

CAPTIVE PARTHIAN.³

ous in those countries, and they had carefully fortified the place.¹ Situated on the lower slopes of Mount Masius, half-way between the Euphrates and the Tigris, Nisibis was destined to be the centre of defence for this region, and the bulwark at once of Syria and of Southern Armenia against the Parthians and Persians.

This war had assumed no very great proportions,² and whatever Dion may say of the occupation of Nisibis, "which costs more than it brings in," the policy was wise. Thus to terminate one civil war on the eve of another which could easily be foreseen, was to act as a ruler should who has the interests of his empire well in mind.

Severus was still in Mesopotamia in the spring of 196, when

SILVER COIN GIVING ALBINUS
THE TITLE OF AUGUSTUS.⁴COIN OF ALBINUS STRUCK AT SIDON.⁵

news of the surrender of Byzantium reached him. This news decided his return to Europe, whither, besides, he was recalled by the anxieties which Albinus was beginning to cause him. He had adopted the latter as his son,⁶ had granted him the title of

¹ Sainte-Croix, *Mém. sur le gour. des Parthes*, p. 17.

² It gave Severus, however, the four salutations as *imperator* which coins and inscriptions indicate for the year 195.

³ Bas-relief from the Antonine Column.

⁴ Cohen, No. 42.

⁵ C. ΚΑΩΔΙΟC ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟC ΚΑΙCΑΡ, around bare head of Albinus. On the reverse: ΠΑΛΛΗC ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ. Pallas and a female figure, with hands clasped, each holding a spear. Bronze.

⁶ This at least is to be inferred from the name of Septimius which Albinus assumed, and the custom of the Emperors when they conferred the title of Caesar. Hence coins were struck

Caesar,¹ that is to say, of heir presumptive, and had designated him to share with himself the consulship of the next year. Coins were struck in honor of Albinus with this title; statues were erected to him, and sacrifices offered in the name of the two Emperors.² Before setting out for the East, Severus had written to him: "The State has need of a person like yourself, of illustrious birth and in the prime of life. I am old and suffer from the gout, and my sons are only boys."³ But for three years Albinus had been left out of all important affairs. Severus had reserved for himself alone the supreme power, even in respect to the smallest matters. It is possible that an inscription relating to works ordered by him from far off in Asia, in an obscure city of Latium, may not be genuine;⁴ but we have the text of a rescript which he sent from the shores of the Euphrates to Rome touching the guardianship of the property of minors.⁶ Another conqueror



ANTIQUE FRAGMENT OF A STATUE OF CLODIUS ALBINUS (SO CALLED).⁵

in honor of Albinus at Hippo Libera, Sidon, and Smyrna (Cohen, vol. iii. *ad fin. Alb.*). Eckhel thinks (vii. 165) that if he had obtained the name of Severus, he would have relinquished it after the rupture between them; but this reason does not seem sufficient.

¹ According to Capitolinus (*Alb.* 2 and 6), Commodus, rendered anxious by the schemes of Severus, had already offered that title to Albinus, which the latter, foreseeing the approaching downfall of the Emperor, and saying that Commodus was seeking companions in his ruin, had refused. The silence of Dion and of other writers does not allow us to accept this letter, which is moreover of so strange a character.

² For instance, the taurobolium of Lyons in 194 (Or.-Henzen, No. 6,032).

³ Herod. ii. 48. Caracalla was born in 188; Geta the year following.

⁴ Spon, *Miscell.* p. 270.

⁵ Torso of Pentelic marble found near Civita Vecchia. The cuirass has a head of Medusa, and under it a palladium, as if to say: I terrify and I protect. The statue (restored) is in the Vatican under the name of Clodius Albinus.

⁶ *Digest*, xxvii. 9, 1. It was read in the Senate, June 13, 195. Others are dated from Viminacium (*Code*, iv. 19, 1), from Eboracum (*Code*, iii. 32, 1), and from Antioch (*Code*, vi. 46, 2); but in the case of the latter there is an error either as to the date, July 22, 205, or else as to the place where it is said to have been written.

took pleasure in dating his decrees from Warsaw or from Moscow, — six hundred leagues distant from his own capital. Albinus, reduced to mere empty honors, saw the sons of Severus growing older, and required but little foresight to be aware that these boys, when they became men, would be formidable competitors to himself. His three legions of Britain were devoted to him; those of Gaul and Spain,¹ which alone of all the armies had never made an Emperor, would naturally be desirous to associate themselves with the fortune of a new ruler. At Rome the former friends of Pescennius and all those who were distrustful of Severus turned their hopes towards Albinus. His illustrious birth was spoken of; the gentleness of the Caesar was contrasted with the harshness of the Augustus; it was believed that under him the Senate would recover its authority;² and some of the most important senators advised him to take advantage of the difficulties of Severus in the East and lay hands upon Rome and Italy. The letters found later among the papers of Albinus reveal these secret intrigues. Medals give us reason to think even that a certain number of the Conscript Fathers went to join Albinus, and that a counter-senate was established, as formerly had been done by Pompey in Greece and Scipio in Africa, and as later, Postumus did in Gaul.³

¹ Borghesi (*Œuvres complètes*, iv. 265) counts thirty-three legions in the reign of Severus, of whom four were in Germany and one in Spain. Which side these five legions took, we do not know; but we do know that the partisans of Albinus were numerous in Gaul and south of the Pyrenees, since after the battle of Lyons there were still disturbances in these provinces, and, according to Spartianus (*Sev.* 12), *Hispanorum et Gallorum proceres multi occisi sunt*. Severus must in the beginning have attached to his party the legions of Upper Germany, and we see that his army came into Gaul by way of that province. But we cannot doubt that Albinus early began to intrigue with the legions of Lower Germany, so close to Britain, and where he had probably been in command. Cf. Ronlez, *Les Légats des provinc. de Belg. et de Germ. Infér.* p. 44. The passage of Capitolinus (*Alb.* 1) would prove that the legions of Gaul, those, at least, of the Lower Rhine, had made common cause with the army of Britain. Two facts are certain, — Severus, at the head of his praetorian guard and the contingents that he had obtained from the twenty-seven legions stationed in the countries under his power, was near failing in the struggle; and for Albinus, who was victorious several times, to have been able at the last moment to put his rival in great danger, it must have been the case that he had not merely tumultuous levies from Gaul and Spain, but well-organized forces in considerable number. Dion speaks of one hundred and fifty thousand men in array on each side. The figures given by the ancient authors can never be absolutely accepted; but we have the right to conclude from what Dion says that the forces on both sides were equal, and that they were numerous.

² See the discourse, so republican, or rather so senatorial, attributed by Capitolinus (13) to Albinus. It is impossible that words like these were ever spoken before an army; but they have been ascribed to Albinus on account of his well-known sentiments in respect to the importance of the senatorial order.

³ Cf. Eckhel, vii. 165, and Spart., *Sev.* 11.

Severus could not be unaware of these proceedings of the Roman nobles, and he doubtless had long distrusted them, although Albinus in 195 had again sent him large sums of money to aid in succoring the cities ruined by Niger. As the Emperor was on his way back to Italy through the valley of the Danube, there reached him, when near Viminacium,

news from Britain and from Rome which decided him to precipitate the inevitable rupture:¹ doubtless the announcement that Albinus had assumed the title of Augustus and was preparing to come down into Gaul. Severus had just emerged victorious from two wars, and had twice



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS AND HIS ELDEST SON
CARACALLA.²

traversed the richest provinces of the Empire; he had given his soldiers military fame, and he could give them gold. Therefore he had but little trouble in inducing them to declare Albinus a public enemy, and to proclaim his own son Caesar and *Princeps Juventutis* under the name of Aurelius Antoninus.³ He himself had already taken the designation of the "son of Marcus Aurelius."⁴ "At last he has found a father," men said, displeased by the success of the low-born Emperor.⁵ But it was no mere taking of a name. The act must have been preceded by a veritable adoption with all legal forms, for Severus insisted that it should have all civil consequences. Naturally there was missing at the ceremony

¹ Spartianus attributes this rupture to Albinus; Dion, to Severus. In either case, it was inevitable. It occurred earlier than June 30, 196, for we have a rescript of that date signed Severus and Caracalla (*Code*, iv. 19, 1). The compilers of Justinian's time gave Caracalla the title of Augustus in it. But this is an error which they often committed in the case of this prince. We must use with prudence the dates furnished by the *Pandects*. Eckhel (vii. 387) says, speaking of these laws signed by the Emperors: . . . *Harum testimonia quam sint infirma, satis compertum*.

² Intaglio of 27 mill. by 40; sardonyx of three layers (*Cabinet de France*, No. 2,100). Severus and Aurelius Antoninus are both laurelled and wear the *paludamentum*. This engraved stone merits, both by the beauty of the material and the excellence of the workmanship, to be placed beside the cameo representing the family of Severus. See later, p. 504.

³ Eckhel, vii. 109 and 173; Dion, lxxv. 7; Spart., *Sev.* 10. At this time first appeared the formula: *imperator destinatus*. Cf. L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 1,826.

⁴ A coin of the year 195, in which Severus bears the title of the son of Marcus Aurelius, represents him holding in his hand a Victory and being crowned by Rome (Cohen, iii. 298.)

⁵ Dion, lxxvi. 9.

the principal actor, namely, the adoptive father, who had been dead for fifteen years. But in some way or another imperial omnipotence obviated this difficulty, as Galba had done in the case of Piso, whom he adrogated¹ without curiate assembly, in virtue of his office of Pontifex Maximus, and as Nerva had done in the case



CLODIUS ALBINUS.²

of the absent Trajan, although the presence and the consent of the person adopted were necessary. Severus was also Pontifex Maximus, and what was legal in the case of a person absent was equally so in respect to one who was dead. Henceforth in the inscriptions of Severus, above all his other titles is placed his

¹ In respect to the *adoptio* and *adrogatio*, see Vol. V. p. 530. After the time of Diocletian the *adrogatio* was made by mere imperial rescript (*Code*, vii. 48, 2).

² Bust in the Campana Museum, found in the Roman Campagna (Henry d'Escamps, *Descr. des Marbres du Musée Campana*, No. 103).

descent from the Antonines,¹ and his sepulchral urn was deposited in their tomb.

This singular act had a double motive. Severus designed to draw upon his family the splendor of the most illustrious of the imperial dynasties, the famous Antonines, whom poets now raised higher than the very gods;² and he also wished, at the same stroke, to seize upon the vast estates that five generations of Emperors, following each other in hereditary succession, had bequeathed to Commodus. On the death of this Emperor an immense fortune had passed to his three sisters; and Severus, rendered anxious by such great wealth in the hands of private individuals, had taken part of it at once, as political inheritor, and proposed to secure the rest proximately as civil heir, by making himself the son of Aurelius. Thus in a day the poorest of the Emperors became the richest.³

The act had serious results. As long as Severus bore only the name of Pertinax, which was dear to the Senate, this assembly, not without some distrust, allowed events to take their course, without attempting, even by the expression of a wish, to modify them. But to call himself the brother of an Emperor whom the Conscript Fathers held in execration, and to rehabilitate that accursed memory, was to justify the acts of Commodus and accept also as an inheritance his hatred towards the nobles. Henceforth fear and anger brooded over the curia, and the Senate, in their thoughts, conspired for Albinus.

Was the rupture preceded, as has been asserted, by an attempt at assassination?⁴ All men at that time held that a dagger-thrust was a good way of simplifying a difficult question, and in this

¹ *M. Antonini Pii filius, Commodi frater, Antonini Pii nepos, Hadriani pronepos, Trajani abnepos, Nervae adnepos* (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 3,277). A daughter of Marcus Aurelius, *Vibia Aurelia Sabina*, is called a sister of Severus (*Ibid.* No. 2,718). There has been lately discovered at Lamoricière, in the province of Oran, an inscription in which Severus is called the son of Marcus Aurelius (*Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des inscr.*, 1882, p. 96).

² Lamp., *Macr.* 7.

³ Up to the time of his consulship he had had in Rome only a very small house and a little landed property, *quum aedes brevissimas habuisset et unum fundum* (Spartianus, *Sev.* 4). The successor inherited the property of the dead Emperor, even to legacies, which, though made, had not yet been paid (*Digest*, xxxvi. 56). In this way the Flavians had inherited the Chersonesus, the property of the first Caesars (*C. I. L.* iii. 726). To manage that great fortune Severus instituted a *procuratio rerum privatarum*, which became permanent (*Ibid.* 12).

⁴ Capit., *Alb.* 7, and Herod., iii.

respect Severus doubtless felt as his contemporaries did. But men who stood exposed to surprises like these were accustomed to guard themselves carefully, and the procedure attributed to the Emperor was so easily to be discovered that we may doubt if he employed it. Spartianus and Dion make no mention of these emissaries sent with fictitious letters and poison, who, according to the confession that torture so often wrings even from the innocent, were to attract Albinus to a secret conference and stab him there, or else gain over his cook and have poison mingled with his food. The British Caesar was too much interested in putting in circulation rumors of this kind for us not to suspect their authenticity.

Severus ordered everything for the approaching campaign with his usual promptitude. Troops hastened to guard the defiles of the Alps, while the bulk of his forces, still ascending the valley of the Danube, turned the mountains on the north and entered Gaul through the province of Upper Germany. He himself made a rapid journey to Rome,¹ where he caused the Senate to confirm his army's declaration against Albinus, and also the elevation of Caracalla to the rank of Caesar. He then returned to take command in person of his forces, who were advancing, divided into two corps. A deputation sent some time after by the Senate found Caracalla in Upper Pannonia, where his father had left him, and Severus in Upper Germany.²

Dion relates a curious fact. A humble grammarian of Rome, fired with martial ardor, suddenly closed his school and betook himself to Gaul. He gave out that he was a senator intrusted by the Emperor with the duty of levying an army. He raised troops and defeated many corps of the army of Albinus. Severus, under the idea that he was a senator, wrote to him congratulating him. Numerianus scoured the country, levied contributions on hostile cities, and collected over 17,000,000 drachmae, which he sent to the Emperor. The war being ended, he presented himself before Severus and confessed the truth. He was offered whatever he desired; but he even refused to enter the Senate, and accepting only a small pension, went to live in the country. Here we have

¹ Eckhel, vii. 175; Cohen, iii. 275.

² L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 1,826; *Mél. d'épigr.* p. 163; Henzen, *Bull. de l'Inst. archéol.*, 1856, p. 88. The deputation mentioned in this inscription was sent in 196.

a schoolmaster who was at once a philosopher and a man of action ; but what he was able to accomplish shows the great disorder of the times.

If we may believe Dion, three hundred thousand men, a hundred and fifty thousand on each side, were ready to join battle in Gaul. Rome with melancholy gaze followed these distant events.



CLODIUS ALBINUS.¹

“While the world was shaken by this great shock,” says the historian, “we senators remained sad and inactive. The people, even in their wonted amusements, manifested their grief. At the games of the circus I saw an immense multitude, but they paid no attention to the races, there was not a cry, nor a word of encouragement to the charioteers. Suddenly, out of the great silence all exclaimed, as with one voice: ‘Peace, for the safety of the people!’” The

¹ Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 49.

Senate and the city, powerless against these ambitious men, asked only repose under whichever master. It was, in a different form, the sentiment of Asinius Pollio before the battle of Actium: "I shall be the spoil of the victor."

An engagement in which the troops of Albinus had the advantage over the lieutenant of Severus preceded the main action,



L. Thuillier. Del.

LYONS AND ITS ENVIRONS.

which took place on the banks of the Saône, between Lyons and Trévoux. The army of Severus, coming from the north-east, faced southward; the forces of Albinus were drawn up facing the north and covering Lyons, where they had their military supplies. Since his accession to the throne, Severus had been accustomed to direct all military operations from a distance; but this time he himself led his troops to the attack, for all his fortune was staked in this final encounter, and the treason that he knew to exist in his rear obliged him to conquer or perish. He did indeed

risk his life; but a cavalry charge by Laetus decided the victory. The conquerors entered Lugdunum, pursuing the fugitives. Albinus, on the point of falling into their hands, made an unsuccessful attempt to kill himself; still living, he was carried into the presence of the Emperor, who at once ordered him to be beheaded. Severus thus remained undisputed master of the Roman world (Feb. 19, 197). Herodian well says: "That one man should have been able to overthrow three competitors already in possession of power; that he should have destroyed one of these in his palace in Rome, the second in the remote East, the third in the remote West, — this is a success almost unparalleled in history."¹

¹ Herod., iii. 23. The expedition against Albinus occupied the later months of 196 and the first two of 197: Dion gives us an exact date for the middle point of hostilities, the

But the moment when Severus attained this fame is also that in which he stained his name with blood.

On the news of the first successes gained by Albinus, the Senate, believing the Emperor ruined, had hastened to coin a silver



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.¹

piece bearing the name of the new Augustus, and to accord honors to his brother and near relatives.² On the part of men so circumspect, this was a very great imprudence, which can only be explained by the arrival of some misleading bulletin from Albinus. Severus immediately wrote to them, expressing his regret at

incident of which he has just spoken occurring on the eve of the Saturnalia; that is to say, Dec. 16, 196.

¹ Bust in the Museum of the Louvre.

² Spart., *Sev.* 11; Capit. *Alb.* 9; Cohen, iii. 227. The Senate could only coin copper pieces; to coin silver was therefore a usurpation on their part.

becoming aware of their preference for Albinus. He had liberally provided for the city, he said; he had made many wars for the Republic; and by Niger's death had delivered them from tyranny. He reproached them for their ingratitude towards himself in accepting as their emperor an adventurer from Hadrumetum who claimed to be of the family of the Ceionii. From this man they

ALBINUS.²

expected consulships and commands,—a trickster skilful in imposture. To him they no doubt proposed to offer a triumph as to an illustrious conqueror; and he ended the letter with expressions of contempt for the literary claims of his rival.¹ Before subduing him by force of arms, Severus desired to render Albinus an object of ridicule, depriving him of the ancestry which he claimed and of the talents for which others gave him credit,—two sources of pride which the Emperor himself enjoyed.

After the battle of Lyons came a still more terrible message,—the head of Albinus set up on a

spear in front of the curia, and these words, concluding a threatening letter: “It is thus that I treat those who offend me.” Severus himself soon appeared in the Senate (June, 197). “He commended the severities of Sylla, Marius, and Augustus, which had saved them, and blamed the moderation of Pompey and of Caesar, which had been their ruin.” He then apologized for Commodus, reproaching the senators for voting the latter infamous,³—

¹ Capit., *Alb.* 12. It is a question whether this letter is authentic. Dion (*lxxv.* 7) speaks of threatening letters, but quotes none; what we have of the addresses of Severus to the Senate give us reason, however, to accept this as genuine.

² Vatican, Hall of Busts.

³ According to Dion, we may believe that it was not until this time that he declared the latter *divus*, ἡποικὰς ἐδίδου τιμὰς; an inscription of the year 196, in which Severus is spoken of as “the brother of the divine Commodus,” proves that this Emperor’s apotheosis preceded the battle of Lyons. In assuming the position of son to Marcus Aurelius, at least, from

they who themselves for the most part lived in a more infamous manner. At the conclusion of his address, which caused the Senate great alarm,¹ a capital process was instituted against sixty-four senators accused of complicity in the designs of Albinus. Thirty-five, proved innocent, resumed their seats; and Dion, who is not friendly to Severus, declares that the Emperor behaved towards them as if they had never given him cause to doubt their fidelity. Twenty-nine, being condemned to death, were executed.² Among this number was that Sulpicianus whom we saw, after the murder of Pertinax, chaffering for the Empire and kissing the hands stained with his son-in-law's blood. Partisans of Niger who had hitherto been spared, now perished,—his wife, children, and six of his near relatives: Severus at this time made a final settlement of all accounts.

These severities find, though not their excuse, their explanation, in the dangers through which the Emperor had just passed: before him, a formidable adversary supported by the forces of the Western provinces; behind him, in Italy, treason; in the East, a Parthian invasion and a military revolt, that of the Third Legion of Cyrenæica, which from its camps in Arabia could again set Syria in a blaze and renew Niger's alliance with the perpetual enemy of the Empire. This legion had proclaimed Albinus,³ and in default of this general would probably have put forward one of the sons of Niger; and this was the condemnation of the rest of the party. Doubtless we must pity the victims of civil discords, especially those involved by the fatality of birth. But if we had a little less compassion for the abettors of civil wars who perish by the conqueror's hand, and a little more for those who are sacrificed in these wars in the fulfilment of their duty as soldiers, we should place beside those twenty-nine senators executed at Rome for having played at the terrible game of revolution, the thirty or

the year 195, Severus accepted the obligation to rehabilitate the memory of his adoptive brother.

¹ Μάλιστα δ' ἡμᾶς ἐξέπληξε (Dion, lxxv. 7).

² Dion, lxxv. 8. Spartianus (*Sev.* 13) enumerates forty-one persons who were put to death. Severus at first allowed the wife and the two (?) sons of Albinus to live, but later put them to death. According to law and custom, all the property of the condemned was confiscated. We find, however, a Ceionius Albinus prefect of Rome under Valerian; the entire family was therefore not involved in the ruin of him who was defeated at Lyons.

³ Spart., *Sev.* 12.

forty thousand corpses of Roman legionaries which covered the Lyonnese plains.¹

Proscriptions were made in the Gallic provinces and in Spain. All who had aided Albinus paid with life or fortune for the crime of not being able to foresee which side would be victorious. One of these proscribed persons begged the Emperor to spare him. "If the destiny of battle, O Caesar, had been against you," this man said, "what would you have done in the position in which I am



THE DIVINE HOUSE.²

now?" "I should have resigned myself," the Emperor rejoined, "to suffer what you are about to endure;" and he ordered the man's execution. "To destroy factions," Severus said, "a man must be cruel once, that he may afterwards be merciful for the rest of his life."³ Isolated cases of resistance⁴ there were, especially in the Iberian peninsula, whither Severus sent one of his best generals, Tib. Claudius Candidus, the conqueror of Nicaea, to fight "by sea and land the rebels of the Citerior province."⁵ Another inscription

¹ . . . ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἀναριθμήτων πεσόντων (Dion, lxxv. 7).

² Septimius Severus and his Family. *Cabinet de France*, cameo, No. 249, sardonyx of three layers, 61 mill. by 101. One of the most valued of the collection. The execution, without being as perfect as that of the monuments of the first Caesars, is still very remarkable. The laurel-wreath of Caracalla and Geta's bare head fix the date of this cameo between the years 198 and 209. Severus wears the paludamentum and the radiated crown; Julia Domna, the veil and diadem. Cf. Chabouillet, *op. cit.* p. 42.

³ Aur. Victor, *Caes.* 20.

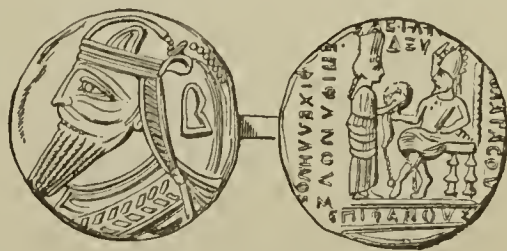
⁴ *Multi post Albinum fidem ei servantes bello a Severo superati sunt* (Spart., *Sev.* 12).

⁵ *C. I. L.* ii. 4,114.

speaks of a tribune serving in the expedition undertaken "to crush the Gallic faction."¹

Lyons had suffered from the great conflict which took place outside her walls; but she quickly effaced the traces of this, and made haste to show herself faithful to the conqueror. Two months and a half after the battle a taurobolium was offered there for "the safety of the Emperor, of his son the Caesar, first designated Emperor, of the Empress Julia Domna, the 'mother of the camps,' and of all the divine house." During four days religion displayed its most imposing pomps for this solemnity, which sealed the reconciliation between the African dynasty and the Gallic nations.²

In Rome, while twenty-nine senatorial families wept for their dead, the populace and the soldiers kept holiday. The latter had received large gifts of money; the former, a congiarium, feasts, and gladiatorial shows,⁴ to compensate them for missing the spectacle of so many thousands of Romans butchered in the battles of the civil war.



COIN OF VOLOGESSES IV.³

Severus could now enjoy repose. The Roman world, twice visited and pacified; the Euphrates and Tigris crossed; the Rhine and Danube flowing peacefully beneath Roman standards: all things invited the ruler to turn his indefatigable activity towards the labors of peace. But during the Gallic war the king of the Parthians, Vologeses IV., had invaded Mesopotamia and besieged Nisibis, which a general, by name Laetus, had valiantly defended; and the revolt of the legion of Arabia proved that in the East the fires of civil war were not yet entirely extinct. Severus

¹ *C. I. L.* iii. 4,037. It is proper to say, however, that the date of this inscription cannot with certainty be fixed in the year 197.

² From the 4th to the 7th of May, 197 (De Boissieu, *Inscr. de Lyon*, p. 36). Later, after the war with the Parthians, another solemn sacrifice was celebrated by the order and at the expense of the general assembly of Narbonensis, *pro salute dominorum imp.* (Gruter, xxix. 12.)

³ Diademed head of Vologeses IV. On the reverse, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΟΛΛΑΓΑΚΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΥΣ ΔΕΔ ΑΠΕΛΛΑΙΟΥ (of the year 464, of the month Apellaeus). Tetradrachm.

⁴ Cohen, iii. 259: *Munificentia Aug.* Severus renewed the prohibition against women appearing in the arena as gladiators (Dion, lxxv. 16).

once more put on the harness, and with extreme diligence made all his preparations. Before withdrawing the principal military forces of the Empire to so great a distance,¹ he recommended to his lieutenants vigilance upon the northern frontiers, authorizing them to make prudent concessions for the sake of preventing hostilities. We know, for example, that Lupus, one of his ablest generals, by presents distributed among the chiefs, put a stop to an invasion of the mountaineers of Caledonia. Having taken these precautions, Severus embarked on board the fleet at Brundisium and sailed to

DENARIUS.³

the Syrian coast; he crossed the Euphrates in time to gain by some victory his tenth salutation as *imperator*, before the close of the year 197.² A treaty with the king of Armenia, who gave him money and hostages, permitted him to advance without anxiety as to his rear.

To the Romans of that time the enemy most dreaded was the Parthian. The heir of the Arsacidae, the successor of Cyrus and of Alexander, alone in the known world was able to throw a shadow upon the imperial majesty of Rome. The deserts which protected this people, the death of Crassus, Antony's vain efforts, and even the ephemeral successes of Trajan, made the Parthian king a troublesome and hated neighbor. To conquer him was the great ambition of the military chiefs of Rome. We have often explained why a definitive victory was impossible. Severus resolved at least to inflict a humiliation upon the great Oriental empire, and close against it the approaches to Syria, by rendering the passage of the Tigris difficult for the Parthian army. Vologeses did not await the Emperor; but his generals engaged with the Romans several times, and one of these combats seems to have resulted in a decisive victory for the latter.⁴ The road to Ctesiphon was open, and Severus advanced.

Obtaining timber from a forest near the Euphrates, he con-

¹ He took a part of the praetorians (Dion lxxv. 10), with their prefect, C. Fulvius Plautianus (Orelli, No. 934), and withdrew detachments from the armies of Europe (Dion, lxxv. 12, and *C. I. L.* iii. 1,193) and also from Africa (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 1,182).

² Eckhel, vii. 176: *Profectio Aug.*; Momms., *Inscr. Neap.* No. 1,410. In respect to this war, Herodian confuses facts, names, dates, and geography.

³ Coin commemorating the tenth salutation of Severus as *imperator*.

⁴ April, 198. This date is to be inferred from an inscription published by Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 1,727.

structed a fleet to convey his heavy baggage, while his soldiers advanced along the river bank. He arrived in this way at Babylon and Seleucia, — cities no longer great except in name, — and seized the capital of the Parthians, whence he carried off a hundred thousand captives. This was the third time within the century that the Romans had entered Ctesiphon.

The return through the valley of the Tigris was difficult, on account of the scarcity of provisions and forage. Like Trajan,



THE PARTHIAN KING ESCAPING FROM CTESIPHON.¹

Severus besieged the stronghold of Atrā² (El-Hadhr), whose king had made an alliance with Niger; and he failed, as did his illustrious predecessor, notwithstanding the machines of the engineer Priscus. In the midst of this desert it was impossible for the besieging army to resort to a blockade, — the great method of the

¹ Bas-relief from the Arch of Septimius Severus.

² A few days' march westward of the Tigris. Its ruins still exist, — not, however, as Herodian says, on the top of a high hill. There are only low hillocks in the region, and some calcareous rocks. Cf. Layard's *Ninereh*; this author visited El-Hadhr. Dion speaks of two sieges of Atrā, or rather of two attacks made upon the town, — one, perhaps, by a lieutenant of Severus; the other, by the Emperor himself.

ancients for the reduction of a city. After twenty days of sharp attacks, the Emperor raised the siege and withdrew through Upper Mesopotamia into the Syrian provinces, about the close of the year 198 or the beginning of the following year.

During this siege, in which the army endured great hardships, there was a moment of insubordination, and it became necessary to make an example. A praetorian tribune had repeated publicly, and doubtless commented upon, the lines which Vergil puts into the mouth of Drances, the partisan of peace at any price: "They take no account of us, and we perish for the ambition of one man." Severus caused him to be put to death; and possibly the punishment was merited. Soldiers who despair, when it is



SEVERUS HOLDING A SUCCESS.
VICTORY IN HIS HAND,
AND CROWNED BY
ROME.³

their duty to hope even against all hope, ruin the cause which they are set to defend, by sowing discouragement in the hearts of the army. And so before Atra, the Emperor, fearing that his troops would no longer obey him,¹ abandoned a last attempt which seemed still to promise

Was it at this time that Laetus perished?² At the battle of Lyons, Laetus, at the head of the cavalry, had not charged until after the report had come to him that the Emperor was mortally wounded, and this charge had decided the victory. Severus being dead and Albinus overthrown, Laetus would have taken their place.⁴ But the Emperor was not dead; that which was perhaps treason became the skilful manœuvre of a great captain. Severus believed this, or allowed it to be said. Dion asserts that, being unable to strike at once the man who appeared to have saved him, he delayed his revenge, and in Mesopotamia caused Laetus to be slain in a camp tumult.⁵ It is probable that there was neither treachery on the one side nor

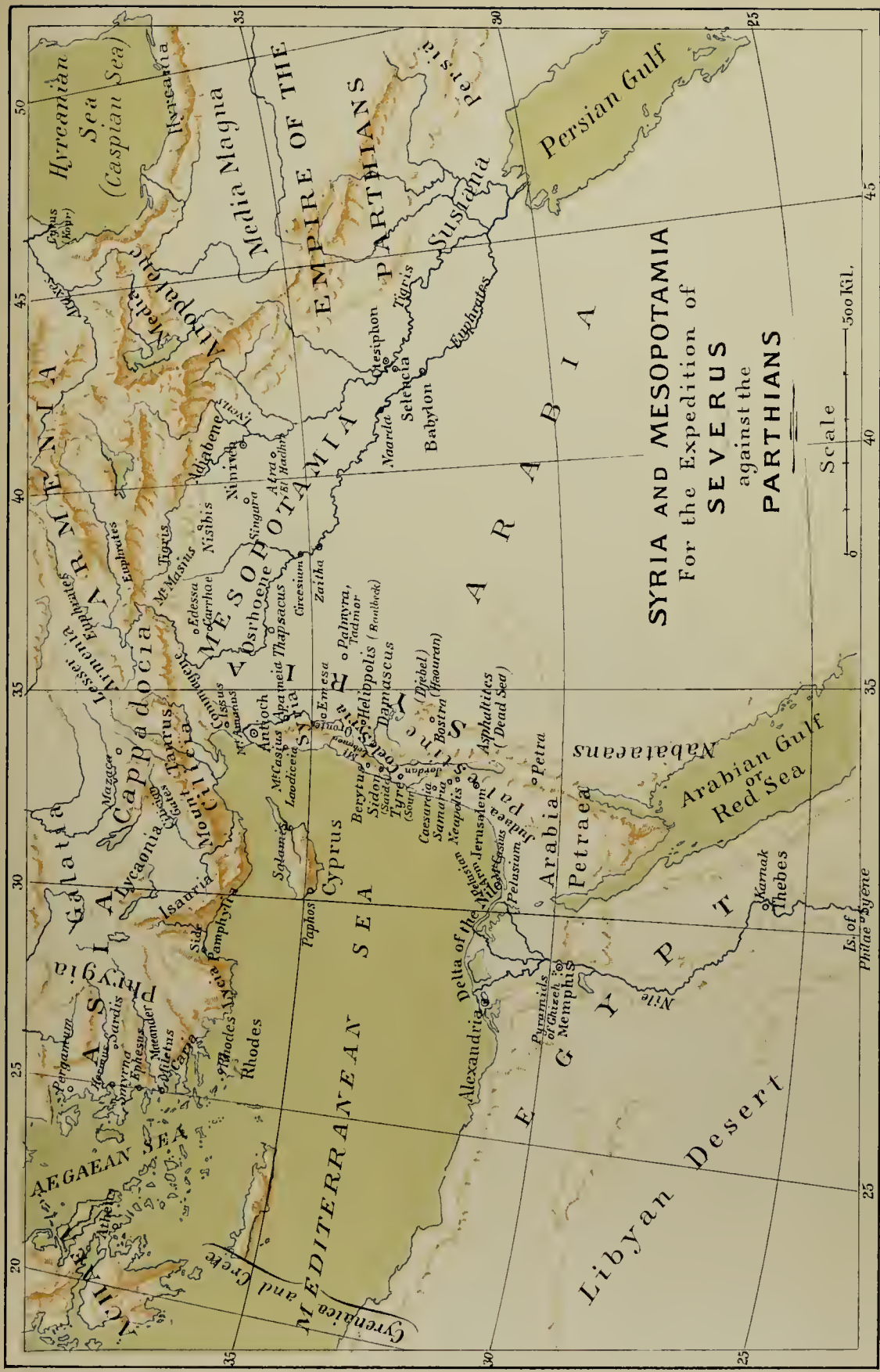
¹ . . . τὴν ἀπειθείαν τῶν στρατιωτῶν (Dion, lxxv. 12).

² This Laetus is to be distinguished from the defender of Nisibis, who was in that city at the time that the other Laetus was in Gaul.

³ Reverse of a great bronze.

⁴ Dion, lxxv. 6. Spartianus says (*Ser.* 11) that the army, believing the Emperor dead, were ready at once to make a new emperor.

⁵ Dion, lxxv. 10. This author contradicts himself, in the same sentence representing Laetus as beloved by the army, and also telling us that Severus charged them with the murder, saying that they had committed it *παρὰ γνώμην αὐτοῦ*.



the instigation of a military riot on the other. Dion¹ was very remote from the spot where this tragedy took place, and could only give currency to rumors which were in circulation in Rome. Now two things in this narrative are diametrically opposite to the known character of this Emperor, — the long hesitation before striking the man whose death he had resolved on, and the dangerous method said to have been employed, namely, the instigation of a camp tumult, which no man can be sure of arresting at the



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS AND HIS TWO SONS.¹

desired point. Certain it is that Laetus was killed by the soldiers, and we know that outbreaks were then frequent in the army; this general doubtless lost his life in endeavoring to allay one.

At Ctesiphon the Emperor had abandoned all the spoils to the soldiery. To thank their chief by gratifying his paternal affection, the army saluted Bassianus with the title of Augustus, and proclaimed Geta Caesar. To the former Severus gave the tribunitian power (198). Thus we see Caracalla, though only eleven years of age, associated in the Empire, — an honor premature, and fatal

¹ *Cabinet de France*, Cameo, No. 250, sardonyx of three layers, 25 millim. by 30. Two Victories, each standing on a globe, are crowning Caracalla and Geta. The Emperor is holding the hand of his second son over a lighted altar. Below it a half-effaced inscription: (ὑπὲρ τὴν) ΝΕΙΚΗΝ ΤΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΩΝ. . . . For the victory of our lords. M. Chabouillet remarks (*op. laud.* p. 437) that the title of *dominus*, or *κύριος*, does not appear on Roman coins until after the time of Diocletian: Caligula, Domitian, and Trajan had already assumed it, or allowed it to be ascribed to them, and it is frequent in inscriptions, especially dating from Severus and his sons.

to him who received it. In this elective Empire the tendency towards heredity was irresistible. The father always yielded to this natural sentiment, and his will was always accepted. At the same time, with the single exception of Titus, hereditary succession had given Rome only bad rulers, — Caligula, Domitian, and Commodus. "The designated Emperor" was soon to add to this list one of the most odious names in history.¹

Notwithstanding his unsuccessful attempt upon Atræ, Severus had struck a heavy blow in the East. The fall of Ctesiphon had resounded even to the most distant provinces, and everywhere was extolled the great conqueror of the Parthians (*Parthicus Maximus*). The Empire had not been materially aggrandized, which



PACATOR
ORBIS.²

would have been a useless gain; but a salutary terror was inspired among those who had been accustomed to break over its frontiers, which kept them quiet for the next eighteen years. Severus therefore merits the title that he received of *propagator imperii*. Many others



FUNDATOR
PACIS.³

were given him,⁴ such as *pacator orbis*, *fundator pacis*, etc.; for the power attested by such constant good fortune had excited an enthusiasm at once servile and grateful. To this, countless inscriptions, especially in the African and Hellenic provinces, bear witness. Athens, which had to obtain pardon for not having been able to foresee the success of the future Emperor, signalized herself by the fervor of her zeal, and numberless cities offered the triumphal sacrifice of the bull.⁵

Through his wife, Julia Domna, Severus was half Syrian. Before his accession to the Empire he had commanded the Fourth

¹ Spartianus in his memoir of Severus (20) calls the attention of Diocletian to the fact that it was very rarely that a great man left a son *optimum et utilem* . . . *aut sine liberis viri interierunt, aut tales habuerunt plerique, ut melius fuerit de rebus humanis sine posteritate discedere*. Diocletian, however, had no sons, and this was a consolation that the imperial historiographer took occasion to offer him.

² Reverse of a gold coin of Severus. The legend surrounds the radiate head of the Sun.

³ Severus veiled, holding an olive-branch. Reverse of a gold coin.

⁴ *C. I. L.* ii. 1,669, 1,670, 1,969, etc. Cf. Cohen, iii. Nos. 118-22, 360-65, 610-12.

⁵ Herzberg (*Die Gesch. Griechenl. unter der Herrsch. der Röm.*), who collects the minutest details, has not been able (vol. ii. pp. 421 *et seq.*) to derive anything of importance from these inscriptions. See also Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* Nos. 2,159, 2,322, 2,374, 2,466, etc.

Scythian Legion in Syria (182-184); after the death of Niger he remained there more than two years, and again four years more after the death of Albinus. He therefore well understood these countries and their needs. But to what purpose were these long residences, especially after the Parthian war was at an end? It certainly could not have been pleasure which detained him in the Oriental provinces. Gratifications of the senses had no hold upon a



A VICTORY SACRIFICING THE BULL OF THE ROMAN TRIUMPHS.¹

man like this, who had an ambition for great things, and consequently a contempt for petty ones. His biographer says, speaking of one of these provinces, that Severus made many regulations there; but the foolish writer does not give us one of them. We may be sure that he employed his leisure in strengthening discipline among the legions, in fortifying the outposts, in establishing order in the land, security upon the highways, and that he introduced Roman civilization into these provinces that he might the better count upon

¹ Bas-relief in the Louvre.

their fidelity. A few facts revealed by those unexceptionable witnesses, coins and medals, permit us to conjecture all the rest which official history hides from us.

First, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, he organized Mesopotamia as a province. He gave it for a permanent garrison two legions which he had created during the war, the First and Third Parthian,¹ and he increased the power of these military forces by multiplying in the new province the civil Roman element.



COIN OF
RHESAENA.³

Colonists were established at Nisibis, the central stronghold of the country, which received the Emperor's name, Septimia; at Rhessaena, where the Third Parthian had its headquarters, between Nisibis and Thapsacus, the great passage of the Euphrates; at Zaitha, the city of olive-trees,² situated on the same river, below Circesium, and at the entrance of the high road to Palmyra. The Syrian desert had become Quiritarian land.

On the northwest of the province the king of Osrhoene had given up to the Emperor his children as hostages, and had furnished well-trained archers for the campaign against the Parthians;⁴ on the north the king of Armenia had been supported in his fidelity to the Empire; on the south the garrison of Zaitha kept the Arab chiefs in obedience; and on the east the passage of the Tigris was secured by the occupation of Nineveh, where Trajan

¹ The *II. Parthica* was brought back into Italy by Severus; it had its headquarters at Albano, where have been found its cemetery and countless inscriptions due to it (Henzen, *Annali*, 1867, pp. 37 *et seq.*). It is useless to try to distinguish the measures adopted by Severus in his first and in his second residence in Mesopotamia.

² *Septimia col. Nisibis* (Dion, lxxv. 3; Eckhel, vii. 517). Eckhel, vii. 518; Amm. Marcell. xxiii. 5.

³ Bronze of the Emperor Decius, making mention of the *III. Parthica*: $\text{CEH(timia) PHCHINIHCION E III P.}$ around a temple, beneath which a river or water god is swimming, — a personification of the Chaboras, the city being situated near the headwaters of this affluent of the Euphrates.

⁴ Later this king came to Rome, between the years 203 and 208, to renew his promises of fidelity. Severus received him there with great display (Dion, lxxix. 16). In respect to the Armenians, St. Martin (in his *Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, i. 301) speaks of an invasion of Khazars who, having traversed the gorges of Derbend in the Caucasus, and crossed the Kour, are said to have defeated the Armenians and slain their king Vologeses, or Wagharsh, in the year 198 A. D. These events explain easily enough why Severus had no need of protecting himself against the Armenians at the time of his descent upon Ctesiphon. Between the Parthians who threatened them from the southeast, and the Barbarians who menaced them on the north, the Roman alliance was a necessity for this people.

had established veterans and where Severus must have left some to defend this outpost of the Empire.¹ He had therefore firmly established his dominion between the two rivers, with the Armenian mountains behind it and a whole system of fortresses and colonies for its protection; accordingly, for centuries to come this province remained the bulwark of the Empire.

After the death of Niger, Severus had united Lycaonia and Isauria to Cilicia, in order to constitute in the neighborhood of Syria a great province, which should guard that gate to the East.² For contrary reasons he divided the province of Syria, which had hitherto given hopes of too ambitious range to those placed in command over it: on the north, Commagene and Hollow Syria,—that is to say, the valley through which the Orontes flows to Antioch and the sea, making itself a passage between the Amanus and Mount Lebanon; and on the south and east, Phoenician Syria, including all the coast and, on the eastern slope of Lebanon and out into the very midst of the desert, Heliopolis, Emesa, Damascus, and Palmyra. The two roads which led into Mesopotamia, crossing the Euphrates, the one at Thapsacus, the other at Circesium, were thus guarded by two armies.³ And they were well guarded. The Emperor intrusted the government of Coele-Syria to one of his ablest lieutenants, Marius Maximus, whom Spartianus calls “a very severe general;” and there is reason to suppose that Phoenician Syria was given in charge to some other experienced captain. After the battle of Issus, Severus had chastised Antioch with great harshness, for the reason that severity was natural to him. This city, however, remained the most important city in the Roman East, and he was too great a ruler to consult his personal rancor rather than the interest of the state, after he had satisfied justice, or what he regarded as justice. Antioch, like Byzantium, therefore, was first punished, and then favored. On his return from Mesopotamia, he stopped in the old Syrian metropolis, not for the purpose of enjoying the delights of Daphne in the pleasure-haunted shades of the sanctuary of Apollo, but to efface the memory of his

¹ Upon the coins of Trajan's reign Nineveh is called *Colonia Augusta*. Dion, a contemporary of Severus, says of Nineveh: ἡμετέρα ἐστὶ καὶ ἀποικος ἡμῶν νομίζεται (xxxvi. 6).

² Lebas and Waddington, *Voyage archéol.* No. 1,480. The inscription in No. 616 shows these two provinces united to Galatia.

³ Under Alexander Severus there were five legions in Syria and in Palestine.

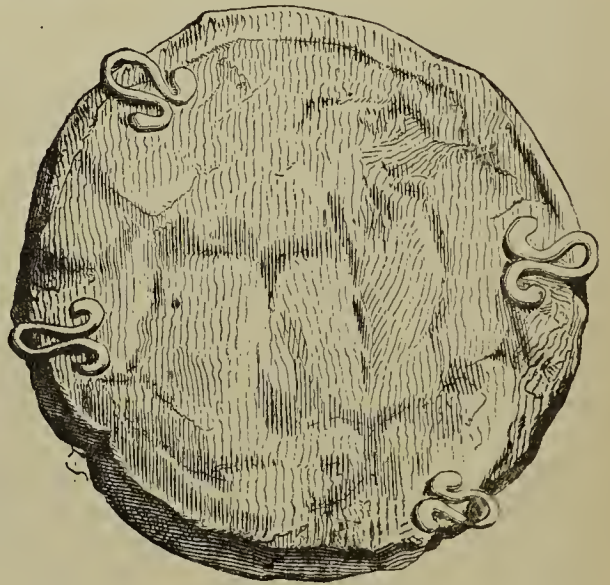
former severities. There he gave his eldest son the *toga virilis* (201), and appointed him consul designate for the following year. This was treating Antioch as a capital. These solemnities and their accompanying festivities at once had their effect in bringing the



1.



2.



3.

PLAQUES OF GOLD OF THE SECOND OR THIRD CENTURY, FOUND IN SYRIA.¹

frivolous city into friendly relations with the new dynasty, and Severus completed the reconciliation in causing magnificent baths to be built at Antioch.²

¹ No. 1, Dionysus; No. 2, Silenus; No. 3, a box in which the plaques were kept. *Cabinet de France*. Cf. *Gazette archéol.*, 1875, pl. 2, and p. 513, a dissertation by Baron de Witte.

² *Chronicles* of Eusebius and Saint Jerome, *ad ann.* 202, and Malalas, p. 294, in the *Byzantine Chronicle*.

In Phoenician Syria great public works were undertaken. Four military milestones, which have been found on the road from Sour to Sayda, all bearing similar inscriptions, dated in the year 198, show the Emperor's lieutenant putting in repair the roads in this province; the name of Severus engraved upon another milestone



ROMAN BRIDGE IN SYRIA.¹

in the neighborhood of Laodiceia proves that the same orders had been given in respect to Syria Prima.²

The Syrian region, sloping down to the Mediterranean Sea, had long been in possession of all the advantages that ancient civilization could bestow. Alexander and his successors had Hellenized these populations of Punic or Aramaean origin, and the colonies that Rome had established there, the garrisons that she there maintained, had introduced her language, which the soldiers were obliged

¹ At Abu-el-as-Waad; Syrian coast. From the *Album de voyage du Duc de Luynes*, pl. 7.

² *C. I. L.* vol. iii. No. 203; Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 1838.

to employ.¹ Tyre, which had been burned by Niger's Moors,² was re-peopled by the veterans of the Third Gallic Legion and obtained the *jus Italicum*. Berytus, where dwelt the descendants of the



JULIA DOMNA, THE WIFE OF SEVERUS.⁴

legionaries of Augustus, had long enjoyed this right, and the city contained the most important school of Roman law; Papinian, Ulpian, and all those juriconsults whose "judaisms" have been noted in the *Pandects*, were students here. Berytus had at first declared against Severus. We do not know whether the city was punished for this, or whether Papinian appeased the Emperor's anger. At any rate, she quickly changed her sentiments; an inscription of the year 196 found in the neighborhood contains the expression of the city's desire for the safety of Severus and Julia Domna, "the mother of the camps."³

On the eastern slope of Mount Lebanon and beyond the Jordan, Rome had had much to do. Before Trajan's time Batanaea (Hauran) and Trachonitis (Ledja) were, as they are to-day, wildernesses traversed by savage nomads. Agrippa the Jewish king said to them: "You live like wild beasts in their lairs."⁵ Trajan

¹ Upon the statue of Memnon all *proskynemata* of soldiers or officials are in Latin; see Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, ii. 324.

² Herod., iii. 3.

³ Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 1,843. Under Caracalla, the Third Gallic Legion cut through rocks (the inscription says mountains) which obstructed the course of the Lycus (*Ibid.* 1,845).

⁴ Statue of Luni marble. Museum of the Capitol. This statue has been preserved with the antique head.

⁵ ἐμφολεύσαντες (Waddington, *op. cit.* 2,329). Cf. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xiv. 15, 5, and Vol. IV. p. 6 of this work.

and Hadrian had introduced order and life into these regions, where great and splendid cities had arisen; and Severus carried on their work. Doubtless he also visited the province of Arabia, where a Roman legion had not long before revolted. The name of *Septimiani*, borne by the decurions of Batanaea, connects with his reign, by a tie which unfortunately we cannot trace, the municipal organization of this region. Ruins of cities are found here whose inhabitants had the language, the measures, the calendar, and many usages belonging to Rome.¹ An imperial legate wrote to these Arabs, into whose country the modern traveller now penetrates only at the risk of his life, as he would have written to the magistrates of Spain or of Gaul, to guarantee them against the abuse of military billet, — a proof that on this remote frontier the Roman administration showed the same care as in the oldest provinces.² At Bostra, the capital of the province of Arabia, legends on medals in Trajan's time were Greek; a few years after Severus they were Latin.³

It is uncertain whether the forty-two blockhouses, whose remains are counted between Damascus and Palmyra, were constructed by Severus or by Hadrian, or even at an earlier date.⁴ We only know that Severus kept them well supplied with men and provisions; for if we do not find distinct traces of him on the

¹ Cf. Henzen, *Bull. de l'Inst. archéol.* 1867, pp. 204 *et seq.* Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,136 *et seq.*

² "If any soldier or traveller forcibly seeks lodging among you, write me to obtain reparation. You owe nothing to strangers, and since you have a caravanserai (ξενώνα) to receive them, you cannot be compelled to take them into your own houses. Post this letter in some public place in your city where it may easily be read by all men, so that none can plead ignorance as an excuse" (Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,424). The author of this letter is a legate of Alexander Severus.

³ Waddington, *ibid.* 460.

⁴ See Vol. V. p. 369. According to Peutinger's map it was two hundred and twelve miles from Damascus to Palmyra. Porter (*Handbook for Syria*) reckons it only forty hours' walk from one city to the other. MM. de Vogüé and Waddington have also found relay-stations of Roman soldiers along a road leading from Bostra to Palmyra across a desolate region. Unfortunately the *graffiti* that they have read there give no dates (*Inscr. de Syrie*, p. 522). In the African Sahara the same precautions were taken; cf. p. 154 of this volume, and *Arch. des Missions*, 1877, pp. 362 *et seq.* When we find the desert everywhere bordered with Roman forts it is easy to understand that the provinces behind them must have enjoyed a prosperity which they lost when the misfortunes of the Empire caused that vigilant police to disappear. An inscription found at Palmyra in 1882 proves that as early as the time of Augustus that city was in some degree dependent upon the Romans (*Bull. de Corr. hellén.*, 1882, p. 439).

road leading to Palmyra, we do find them at Palmyra itself. This



PALMYRA. ROYAL TOMB.

great mart of the desert, this Syrian outpost on the middle Euphrates, had furnished Severus with most useful succor in his expedition against Babylon. Like all commercial cities, Palmyra was cosmopolitan. Parthians and Armenians and Romans were there, also Greeks, and a Jewish colony of importance, some of whose members rivalled the most considerable native Palmyrenes in wealth.¹ Accordingly, like Alexandria, the city had a *juridicus* to settle disputes which might arise between foreigners.² The family of the Odainath already held the first rank in Palmyra. One of them, Hairan, doubtless strategus of the city in the time of the Parthian war,

so ably seconded Severus by his knowledge of localities and by the supplies that he was able to furnish to the legions, that the

¹ De Vogüé, *Inscr. semit.*, 7, 16, 65, et passim.

² Δικαιοδότης. Cf. Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,606a.

Emperor permitted him to assume the name of Septimius, which from that time became the *gentilium* of this great Palmyrene family. In the same way Herod the Great had been authorized by Augustus to unite himself to the family of the Caesars by adding to his own names that of Julius. When sixty years later an Odainath, who had assumed the title of "king of kings," made himself the protector of the Roman Empire in the East, his praenomen Septimius recalled the time when his family were but the clients of the Emperor Severus.

The desert cities changed their conditions as the Arab sheiks changed their names: the Tadmor of Solomon's time was now a Roman colony, invested with the privileges of the *jus Italicum*; it had duumvirs (στρατηγοί), aediles (ἀγορανόμοι),¹ and assemblies of senate and people. By its monuments it seems of Greek origin, by its institutions of Roman. It even had its distributions: frumentary tesserae have been found there, and tickets for corn and oil,² and among its citizens were Roman knights and senators. Severus had already, it is probable, assigned to it for a garrison that body of cavalry which we find there at a later period.³

Then, as now, the wandering Arabs were obliged during the summer to lead their flocks to the springs of Palmyra or to the pastures of Djebel-Hauran.⁴ By strongly occupying these points, the Romans made themselves masters of the desert, and preserved order in it better than has ever been done since.

At the eastern extremity of the Hauran, in the centre of a very desolate region, rises a volcanic hill, at whose base is a Roman camp, with walls over six feet in thickness, flanked with towers and protected by a moat. A resolute band within this fort could bid defiance to all the Arabs of the desert. On the summit of the hill an outpost kept watch over this vast plain, where are seen ruins of baths and of houses. "Before us," says

¹ In other Greek and Syrian cities the aediles bore the name of bishops, ἐπίσκοποι, or supervisors.

² De Vogüé, *Inscr. sémit.* 16, 146-7, and Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,606a, 2,607, and 2,629.

³ Waddington, *ibid.* 2,580.

⁴ The chiefs of these nomads were called ethnarchs, strategæ, or οἱ ἀπὸ ἔθνους νομάδων. Cf. Waddington, *op. cit.* p. 511. Certain of these tribes retain the same names they bore eighteen centuries ago (*Ibid.*, p. 525, No. 2,287).

M. de Vogüé, "no European ever disturbed this solitude."¹ But the Romans had been there, and they had brought civilization and security.

Thus a regular form of life began to be introduced into these desolate solitudes. Sheltered by the fortified posts which bordered "the land of thirst," cities sprang up in the valleys, and canals brought down to them the mountain streams;² the municipal system was developed there, and inscriptions speak to us of strategi and decurions in places where was lately heard only the jackal's cry. Often from the summit of a mass of ruins the traveller sees



COIN OF SEPTIMIUS
SEVERUS STRUCK AT
PETRA.⁴

in the distance great blocks of basalt set regularly, and bordered with a double row of larger blocks which rise above the surface. It is a Roman road, which makes known that fifteen centuries ago a great nation passed that way.³

At countless points upon this Biblical soil we find the Roman stamp. In extreme antiquity the plateau of Baalbec bore a sanctuary of Baal, the great god of the Semitic tribes; but the magnificent ruins now to be seen on that spot date from the times of the Antonines and Severus.⁵ We must therefore recast the words of Juvenal: it is no longer that the Orontes flows into the Tiber; in the second and at the beginning of the third century of the Christian era, the Tiber flows through the desert, bearing the spirit of the Empire and its arts even to the remote city of Petra.

Severus had lately followed the track of Trajan as far as Ctesiphon; in Palestine and Egypt he now followed that of Hadrian.

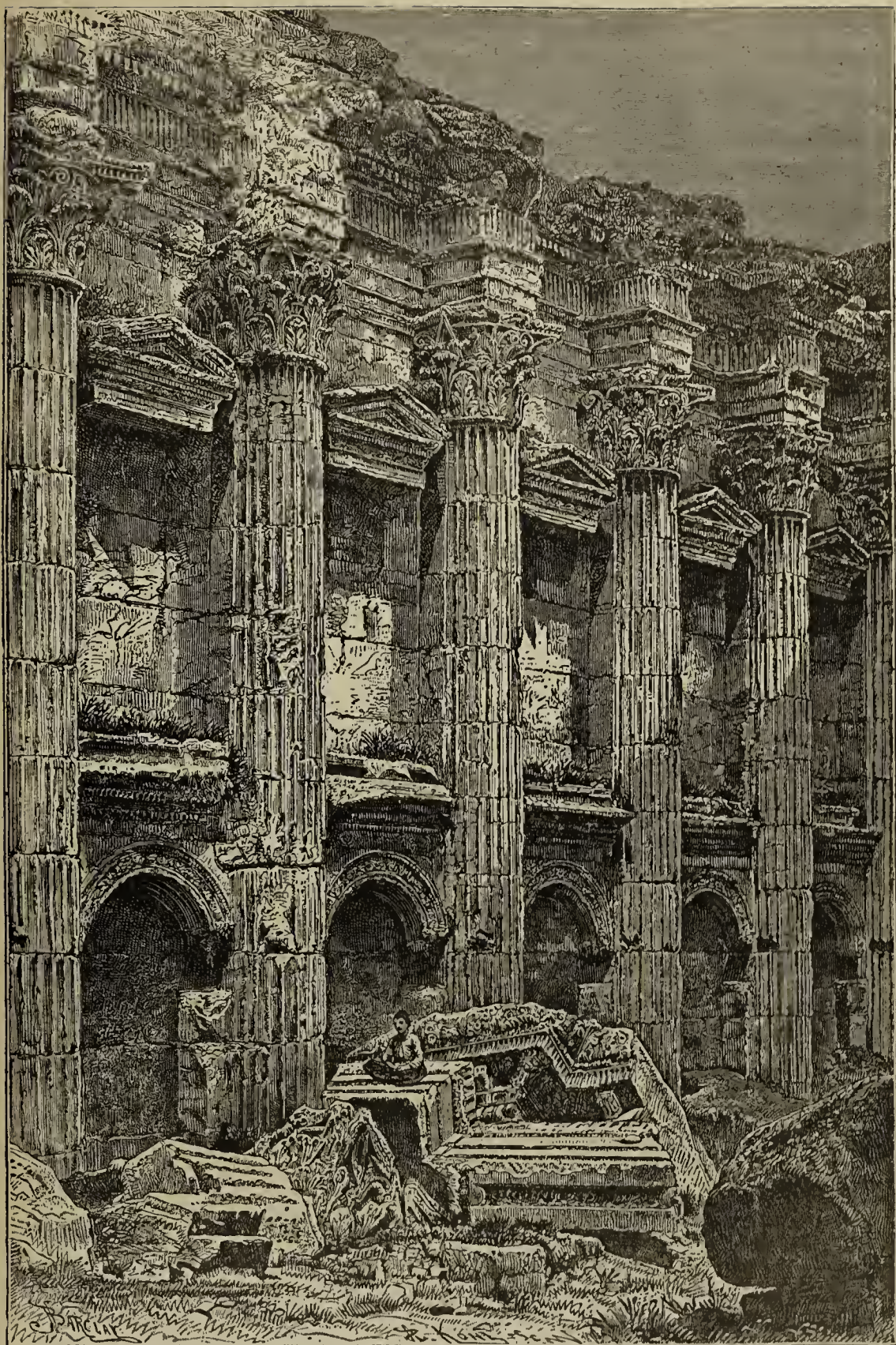
¹ *La Syrie centrale*, by M. de Vogüé.

² Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,296 and 2,301, ἐκ πρὸς ὁλῆς of Corn. Palma. The first care of Cornelius Palma, the conqueror of Arabia, had been to furnish a supply of water to the new subjects of the Empire. In pursuing this excellent policy in Algeria, the French have but followed a Roman example.

³ "The Roman road from Bostra to Damascus still exists, almost in its original condition," says M. Waddington, "and the remains of many others are found here and there in these regions." The Septimian coins are very abundant in all these provinces, and to this epoch belong the ruins of Heliopolis, the temple of Jupiter having been built by Septimius Severus and the temple of the Sun by Hadrian and Antoninus. The latter building was destroyed by Theodosius (*Revue archéol.*, April, 1877).

⁴ ΛΔΙΑΝΗ ΠΕΤΡΑ. The personified city seated upon a rock. Reverse of a bronze coin.

⁵ See Vol. V. of this work, pp. 372, 373, 440, and *Syria of the Present Day*, by Dr. Lortet.



INTERIOR OF THE SMALL TEMPLE AT BAALBEC.

Palestine, as usual, was a prey to disorders. Dion speaks of a certain robber-chief who devastated Judaea and was able to baffle all his pursuers. One day he had the audacity to enter the Emperor's camp with a band of horsemen, and to converse with Severus as though he had been a tribune of the Roman army. No



RUINS OF HELIOPOLIS (BAALBEC). TEMPLE OF JUPITER.

one suspected the bravado, and the bandit, probably only a chief who preferred to maintain his independence, returned in safety to his mountains. This fact, the story of Bullas, one of the curious legends of Italian outlawry,¹ the history of Maternus, who, under Commodus, pillaged the entire country of Gaul, and of Numerianus, the false senator, of whose exploits we have recently made men-

¹ See above, p. 180.

tion, show what rapid progress disorganization was making in this great body, the Empire, as soon as the Comodi and the Juliani succeeded the Trajans and Hadrians. To maintain order in so many countries and amid populations so diverse, it was plainly needful that all disturbers of the public peace, whether senatorial mischief-makers, ambitious chiefs, or highway robbers should feel the hand of an energetic ruler, a man whose conscience would not be disturbed by any severity, however extreme. One of the Odainath of whom we have just now spoken, was planning a revolt and had intrigued with the Persians. Rufinus, the Roman general in command, put him to death ; and being summoned before the Emperor on complaint of the son of the murdered man, made reply : " Would to the gods that the Emperor would authorize me to rid him of the son also ! " ¹ This justice was too summary ; but it had the effect of preventing a Persian invasion. Is it safe to say that the French in Algeria or the English in India have never acted in a similar manner ? The Roman Emperors not infrequently found themselves confronting these formidable perils when the safety of the state, as they then understood it, appeared to be the supreme law.

Severus was one of those men who are ready to sacrifice everything to the public tranquillity.² Unfortunately, he included the Christians among the disturbers of the provinces. The Jews and Samaritans, sword in hand, had just taken up again in Palestine their ancient quarrel. Whether the Christians were involved in it, is not now clear. But this resort to arms on account of religious opinions displeased the Emperor. The legions struck a few blows, and tranquillity was restored by some executions. Later, the Senate saw fit to give these measures, taken in the interest of public order, the importance of a victory. When the Emperor declined to make a triumphal entry into Rome in honor of the taking of Ctesiphon, the senators, not to deprive his son of a compliment and Rome of a holiday, decreed to Caracalla a Jewish triumph. In order to prevent the recurrence of these disturbances, " Severus," says his biographer, " made many regulations during his stay in Palestine." Of these we know but one, copied from the old imperial decree which forbade the rabbis to practise

¹ De Vogüé, *La Syrie centrale*, p. 30. This took place in the reign of Severus, between 241 and 251.

² *Fuit delendarum factionum cupidus* (Aur. Victor, *De Caes.* 20).

circumcision upon men of other races than their own,¹ and forbade the Christians to make proselytes. The same measure was applied to both religions, not with the design of destroying them, but in order to prevent them from gaining ground. Elsewhere we shall see that the results of this edict differed extremely in the two cases.

It was not, however, the intention of Severus that these Jews, shut up by his rescript within their religion and their race, should be as pariahs amid their fellow-citizens; he permitted them to aspire to municipal honors, releasing them from obligations which were inconsistent with their religion.² But customs are stronger than the law; the Jews remained isolated until the time when Constantine, anxious to recruit the exhausted senatorial class, ordered that all who had the requisite landed property should be included in it.³ This, however, brought in but few recruits; for the Jews, considering themselves as strangers and sojourners anywhere except in Palestine, bought neither land nor houses: they already desired only property that they could carry with them wherever they went.

From Palestine, Severus went into Egypt, — a fruitful land, where the race was as prolific as vegetation,⁴ numbering at this time over eight million, with few slaves; for agricultural labor was carried on then, as now, by fellaheen of free condition, and the industrial labor by a multitude of Greeks and Jews. Life was easy in Egypt, except in the quarries, which were worked only by convicts; and to this industry the Emperor caused great activity to be imparted.⁵ At Mount Casius, Severus, like Hadrian, offered a funeral sacrifice at Pompey's tomb, and thence went up the Nile by the Pelusiatic branch.⁶ He visited with interest the Pyramids of Ghizeh, — finer, or at least more regular at that time than now, because they

¹ An edict of persecution against the Jews was never issued: *Judaeorum sectam nulla lege prohibitam satis constat* (Constitution of Theodosius, anno 393. *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 8 and 9).

² *Honores adipisci permisit, sed et necessitates eis imposuit quae superstitionem eorum non cederent* (*Digest*, l. 2, 3, sec. 3).

³ *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 8, 3.

⁴ Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 16, 4) reckons the population at 8,700,000, — a number which, a hundred years later, was even larger. Cf. Letronne, *Journ. des Savants*, 1844, p. 434.

⁵ An inscription of Septimius Severus in Egypt commemorated the discovery near Philae of granite quarries, whence were obtained "large and numerous columns." Cf. Letronne, *Journ. des Savants*, 1836, p. 684; *C. I. L.* iii. 75. The quarries of Djebel Fatereh continued to be worked up to the time of Diocletian.

⁶ Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, ii. 487-518.

had still their facing of stone; the great Sphinx at their feet,—a solar symbol already worn away by the many centuries which had then passed over it, which was repaired by Severus; the Serapeum of Memphis, leading to the tombs of Apis, which a Frenchman, Mariette, has re-discovered; the Labyrinth; and the marvels of Thebes and of Philae. He had explained to him the hieroglyphics



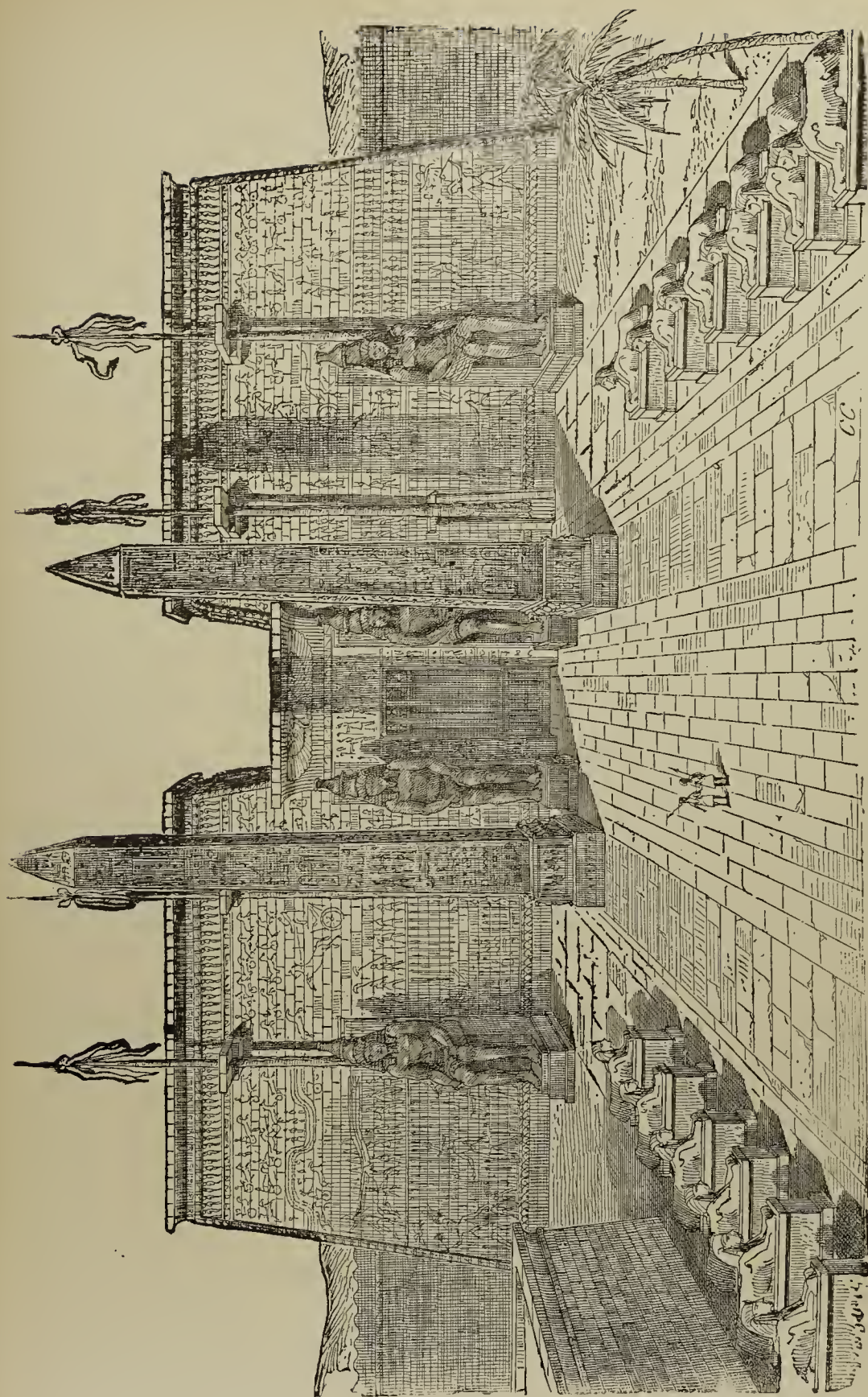
THE EGYPTIAN SPHINX.

which it was still the custom to put on the walls of the temples,¹ and Champollion finds his name at the side of sculptures which the Emperor ordered for the pronaos of the great Temple of Esne.² Memnon still spoke, but it was for the last time. In an excess of pious zeal, Severus restored to its present condition this colossus, broken in the time of Augustus; but from the day when the statue no longer offered to the rising sun its wide cleft of unequal surface, impregnated with the dews of night, the god ceased to utter "his divine voice."³

¹ The last known hieroglyphic inscription is an offering of the Emperor Decius, about the year 250; but Letronne is of opinion that the use of this writing continued as late as the sixth century (*Journ. des Savants*, 1843, p. 464). Inscriptions are extant in which the Greeks call themselves engravers of hieroglyphics (Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, ii. 475).

² *Lettres écrites d'Égypte*, p. 86.

³ See Vol. V. p. 384, and the famous paper by Letronne upon the statue of the Pharaoh



PRINCIPAL FAÇADE OF THE TEMPLE AT LUXOR (THEBES). SEE P. 530, NOTE.

“Curious in respect to all things human and divine, even the most secret,” Severus informed himself as to the sources of the Nile, to which the Romans approached very near.¹ Dion Cassius speaks of them in mentioning the Emperor’s journey, the story of which he probably heard; and if he is deceived in placing the



THE TEMPLE OF ISIS AT PHILAE.

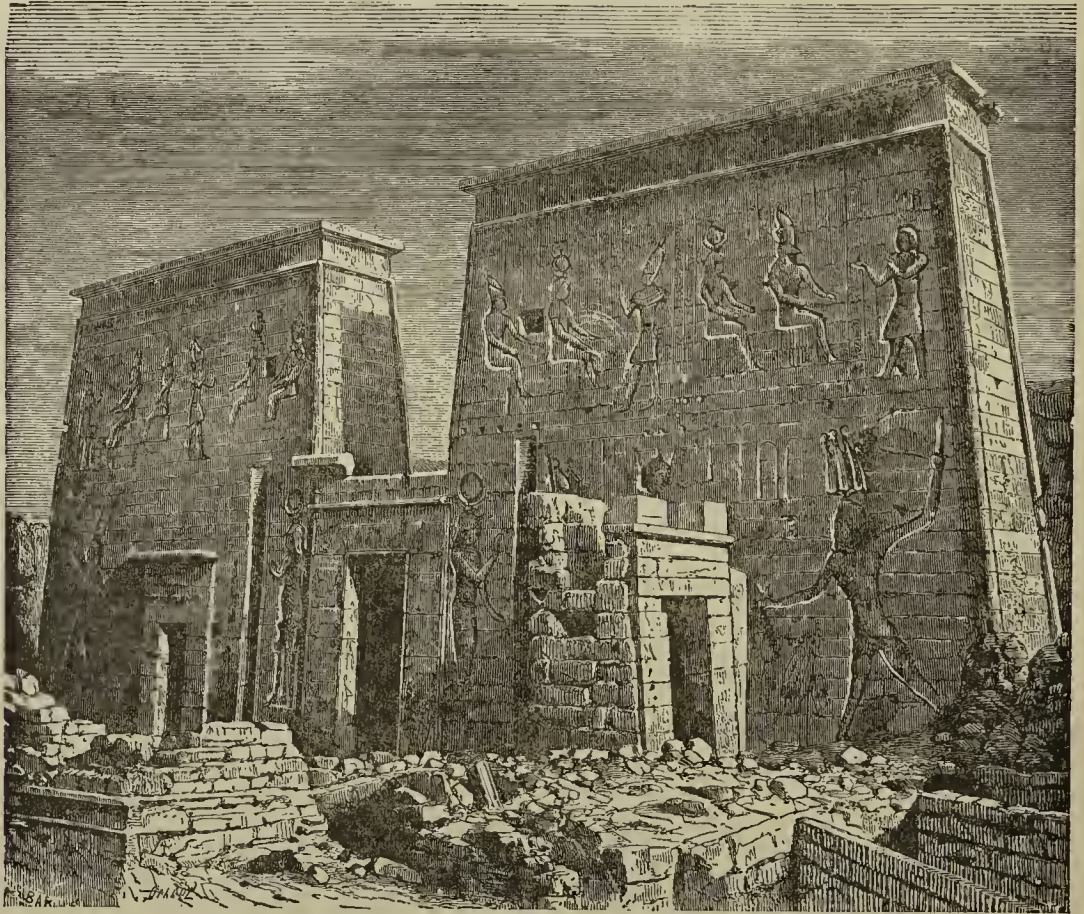
sources of the river at the extremity of the Mauretanian Atlas, he says nearly the truth when he speaks of it as emerging from vast marshes which lie at the base of a high mountain covered with snow.² Severus had the intention of penetrating into the

Amenophis, who lived about the year 1680 B.C. No one of the inscriptions engraved upon this colossus is later than the time of Severus.

¹ Mariette’s last discoveries at Karnak prove that the Pharaohs had bequeathed to their successors a much more complete knowledge of the valley of the Upper Nile than was believed. The armies of Thothmes III. certainly penetrated as far as Cape Ras-Hafun, south of Cape Guardafui, probably even in the interior going beyond Khartoum, and Ptolemy speaks of three great equatorial lakes. However, Amm. Marcellinus (xxii. 15) declares the sources of the Nile to be undiscoverable: . . . *posteræ ignorabunt ætates*. Nubian inscriptions state that the Blemmyes and the Axumites were conquered by Severus.

² Dion, lxxv. 13.

upper valley of the Nile; but a pestilence breaking out, he relinquished the design and returned down the river to Alexandria. Here he visited the tomb of Alexander, the Museum, always busy with its useless labors,¹ and the library of the Serapeion, one of whose courts was adorned with the famous Pompey's Pillar. The



PYLONS OF THE TEMPLE OF ISIS AT PHILAE.²

Emperor was pleased with this city, or thought it politic to appear so. The Alexandrians had taken sides with Pescennius, and inscribed upon their gates: "This city belongs to Niger, our master." When Severus appeared, they said to him: "We did indeed write this, but were well aware that thou wast Niger's master."³ The Emperor asked no better excuse to pardon them. He restored to them the senate and municipal magistrates which Augustus had

¹ See Vol. V. p. 380. In respect to the *nugae difficiles* of the Museum. cf. Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, ii. 399, 400, the inscription of that pensioner of the Museum who calls himself an Homeric poet because he composed *centos* of Homer's verses.

² See Vol. V. p. 379, the restoration of this temple.

³ Spart., *Sev.* 17.

taken away; revised their laws,¹ restricted to voluntary jurisdiction the functions of the Roman *juridicus*, who had been for over two centuries the supreme judge in Alexandria; and to mark his confidence in this province he cancelled the rule established by the



THE PHARAOH AMENOPHIS III. (MEMNON.)²

first Emperor, — that Egypt should have for governor only a prefect of the equestrian order; ³ and, finally, he gave the city a gymnasium and a great temple, which he called the Pantheon.⁴ Like

¹ Dion, li. 17. Also Malalas says (xii. 293): Ἰνδουλγεντίας αὐτοῖς παρασχῶν ἐδέξατο αὐτοὺς.

² Basalt statue in the British Museum.

³ *Chronic. Alex.*, ad ann. 202.

⁴ An inscription (Letronne, *ibid.* p. 463) shows him also repairing the pavement of a temple. If so many epigraphic monuments had not perished we should certainly have had more numerous proofs of the works ordered by Severus in Egypt.

Trajan and Hadrian, Severus was a great builder, and monumental Egypt was not likely to discourage his taste for magnificent constructions.

This strange country made its wonted impression upon the imperial traveller. In after years, Severus took pleasure in recurring to his journey in Egypt and the marvels which he saw there. The cult of Serapis, whose sanctuaries he had everywhere found,¹ particularly attracted him. He was impressed with this potent combination of dissimilar doctrines whereby the pagan mind sought to satisfy the ideas then dominant of divine unity and of salvation by

SERAPIS.²

the god who is "master of light and darkness, of life and death." Macrobius has preserved this reply of an oracle of Serapis: "Who am I? I will tell you what I am. The vault of heaven is my head; the sea, my breast; the region of the sky, my ears; and my eye, the brilliant torch of the sun which sees all things."³ Serapis represented therefore the god in whom all others were united; combined with Isis, "the goddess of a thousand names," he was the fecundating force, and the nature which conceives; he was also the god who gave safety in heaven and earth. His temples were thronged with pilgrims, the walls of them were covered with offerings, and all men talked of the miraculous cures that he wrought, while the old divinities remained silent and gloomy at their deserted altars. Severus and his family seem to have been won over to this cult.⁴ We know that Caracalla consecrated to Serapis many temples, even in Rome, — notably one near the Colosseum, a sanctuary of Isis and Serapis which gave its name to that region of the city;⁵ and when we read that Severus built a Pantheon at Alexandria, we are led to believe him influenced by a kind of religious syncretism in giving the name

¹ The rhetorician Aristeides enumerates forty-three in Egypt. To this author Serapis is the god of the gods, who rules the land and sea, light and darkness, life and death.

² On a bronze of Septimius Severus coined at Ptolemais.

³ *Saturn.* I. xx. 17.

⁴ *Jucundam sibi peregrinationem hanc propter religionem dei Serapidis . . . Severus ipse postea semper ostendit* (Spart., *Sev.* 17).

⁵ The third. The worship of Isis had been secretly introduced into Rome as early as the time of the Second Punic War (Val. Max., I. ii. 3), and two centuries before the Christian era Delphi already had a Serapeion, which the French School of Athens has recently discovered (*Bull. de corr. Hellén.*, 1882, p. 306). In respect to this cult, see above, p. 392. Commodus was a fervent worshipper of Isis (Lamp., *Comm.* 9).

of all the gods to a temple which in his mind he dedicated to the One Divine Principle. Thus took shape this new form of paganism which we have seen coming into existence in the preceding century, which prepared the way for the Jehovah of the Mosaic religion.¹

Notwithstanding his interest in religions, Severus was no more favorable to theological quarrels in Egypt than he had been in Palestine. He removed from all the sanctuaries the books containing secret doctrines, those which kept alive the secret organizations so often prolific in seditious schemes. These books he did not destroy, but he shut them up in the tomb of Alexander, so that no one should read them. He was a true Roman, one of that class of soldiers and statesmen who have no affection for matters which the sword can never settle and by which governments are forever disturbed. But he was also a man of fine intelligence. Among these books there is one which, instead of proscribing, he certainly admired, the *Book of the Dead*, which we find with the mummies, as it were a voice from beyond the tomb. Here are words like these: "When that divine principle, Intelligence, enters a human soul, she seeks to rescue it from the tyranny of the body and raise it to the heights where she dwells. . . . Often she triumphs; then the conquered passions become virtues, the soul, set free from its bonds, aspires to good and divines the eternal splendors through the veil of matter which obscures its vision.

"When a man dies, his soul appears before Osiris and his actions are weighed in the unerring balance. If it is pronounced guilty, it is given over to the tempests and storms of the combined elements, until it can return into a body, which in its turn it tortures, overwhelms with evils, and drives into crime and madness." That is to say, the wicked man is a condemned soul expiating the sins of a former existence.

But Heaven opens to the soul which can say to its judge: "I have followed what is right and spoken the truth; no man can

¹ See above, pp. 401 *et seq.* Severus had already erected in Byzantium a temple and a statue to the Sun, *Deo Zeuxippo* (Malalas, *Chronogr.* xii. 291). Tertullian (*Apol.* 24) says himself to the Romans: *Nonne conceditis de estimatione communi aliquem esse sublimiorem et potentioorem velut principem mundi . . . imperium summae dominationis esse penes unum.* We shall see in the time of Aurelian, Constantine, and Julian, the increasing popularity of the worship of the Sun.

complain of me. I have cherished my parents; I have been the joy of my brothers and the delight of my servants. I have committed no crime or abominable act. No laborer has exceeded his day's work for me. I have done the slave no ill turn with his master, nor driven the flock away from its pasturage; I have committed no adultery. I am pure! I am pure!"

And again: "I have neither lied nor done evil, and I have sowed joy, giving bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty, and garments to the naked.

"Then this pure soul rises through the unknown heavens. Its knowledge increases, its strength is augmented, it passes through the heavenly dwelling and tills the mystic fields of Aalu. At last the day of the blessed eternity dawns for it. It is united with the flock of the gods in adoration of the Perfect One; it sees God face to face, and is lost in Him."¹

That which ancient Egypt had so long kept for herself alone, was now spreading through the world. This country, of which Bossuet, judging by external appearances, said that "all was god there except God himself," taught divine unity, the judgment of the dead, and eternal blessedness gained by virtue in our earthly life. From Memphis, from Jerusalem, from Palmyra, from even remoter lands, was setting a current of ideas in certain respects analogous, which was destined to meet another current from Athens and Rome, and to blend with it. Upon these united streams was to sail—first cautiously and silently, but presently with all its canvas set—Saint Peter's bark bearing the triumphant Cross.

¹ M. Maspero, *Revue critique*, 1872, p. 338.

NOTE. — The illustration facing p. 524 represents a restoration of the main façade of the temple at Luxor by Ch. Chipiez, borrowed from the *Hist. of Arch.* of Perrot and Chipiez, vol. i. p. 349.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

GOVERNMENT OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (193-211 A.D.).

I.—THE COURT; PLAUTIANUS AND JULIA DOMNA.

THE East being pacified and organized, Severus returned to Italy through Asia Minor and Thrace. Like Hadrian, he was in no haste to return to the capital, with its festivities and intrigues. It seemed to him wiser to inspect the frontier of the Danube, which he had not visited for nine years, and the armies of Moesia and Pannonia, to which he owed his throne. "Everywhere," says Herodian, "he introduced order throughout the provinces."¹ We admit the assertion as well founded; unhappily, however, we have not the facts whereby to prove it.

At last, in the middle of the year 202,² Severus came back to Rome. It was the tenth year of his reign. At this point it had been once the custom to renew the imperial powers (*sacra decennalia*); but this fiction had been for some time given up. The solemnity was now only an anniversary celebrated with great magnificence. Severus on this occasion added a largess of fifty million drachmae, distributed, at the rate of a thousand sesterces apiece,⁴ among the praetorians and all those who received public corn. The ruler had his share. An Arch of triumph, which is still in existence, was erected in his honor at the foot of the Capitol. Its proportions are fine; but the great amount of carving—which seems the work of artisans rather than



GOLD COIN.³

¹ Herod., iii. 10.

² We find in the *Code* (ii. 53, 1) an edict dated at Sirmium the 18th of March, 202, and in Cohen (iii. 234) a coin . . . ADVENT. AVG., struck in the third consulship of Severus. An inscription of Lambese (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* 69) gives ground for the supposition that in 203 Severus went to Africa.

³ Souvenir of the return of Septimius Severus to Rome (*Adventus avgv.*); the Emperor and his two sons on horseback, lifting the right hand.

⁴ Dion, lxxvi. 1. This largess implies 200,000 persons to receive it. See p. 213.

of artists—betrays the decline of decorative art. A long inscription states that the Arch was constructed in honor of the Emperor, “who has strengthened the state and enlarged the Empire.”¹

Two years later were celebrated the secular games, which brought new gifts² to the people and the soldiers. Heralds went



ARCH OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS AT ROME.

through the city and throughout Italy proclaiming: “Come to these games, which you will never see again.” The last celebration had occurred in the reign of Domitian, in the year 88. Three generations were allowed to pass between one celebration of these

¹ . . . *Ob rem publicam restitutam imperiumque populi Romani propagatum* (Orelli, No. 912).

² Josephus, ii. 7; Herod., iii. 8; Cohen, iii. 254 and 273.

games and the next. That in the time of Severus was the eighth which the Romans had observed.

At this time there was in Rome a man almost as powerful as the Emperor himself, Plantianus, the prefect of the city. It will be remembered that Augustus had seemed to divide the authority into two parts, — the one relinquished to the Senate, the other reserved for the Emperor, — and that he had constituted two kinds of offices, those belonging to the senatorial order, and those belonging to the equestrian order. At the head of the former was the prefect of the city; at the head of the latter, the praetorian prefect. This division of authority was not a real one; the truth quickly appeared, and the Emperor was politically what he must be in such a condition of society, — the sole power.² He absorbed by degrees into his council³ — which was composed of senators, juriconsults, and the heads of the imperial judiciary — almost all the legislative, judicial, and administrative power of the Senate. The latter retained scarcely any other function than that of registering the decrees determined on by the council.

GOLD COIN.¹

The functionary who had especially the imperial confidence, since he held the Emperor's life in his hands, was the man who gained most by this change. In the beginning, the praetorian prefect had no other duty than that of protecting the person of the *imperator*, who to this end had invested him with military jurisdiction over all the troops stationed in Italy.⁴ The Greeks called him "the king's sword,"⁵ and he followed close behind the Emperor in all military expeditions. This "sword," however, the Emperor employed for all kinds of uses. Was it necessary to arrest a guilty person, to kill an innocent one, or merely to make preliminary investigations, the praetorians were there; they and their chief owed the ruler a military obedience in whatever he

¹ Memorial of the secular games (*saecularia sacra*). Severus, veiled, standing, sacrificing at an altar; opposite the Emperor, Caracalla, standing; behind the altar, Concord; at the left, a flute-player; at the right, a woman playing the lyre.

² I mean to say that, in the nature of the case, he inevitably became the political and military head, but he was not obliged to become the sole administrator.

³ See Vol. IV. p. 97, and Vol. V. pp. 394, *et seq.*

⁴ Except the urban cohorts, which were under the orders of the *praefectus urbi* (Dion. l. iii. 24).

⁵ τὸ βασιλείον ξίφος (Phil., *Vita Apoll.* vii. 16).

might command. The criminal jurisdiction of the prefect was extended at first from the soldiers to the slaves, and by degrees invaded all classes. He who originally was only "the Emperor's sword" became "the sharer in his labors, his assistant,"¹ and in many cases his representative, — *vice sacra agens*, as was the phrase later. He became a member of the council, and in the Emperor's absence was its presiding officer; he shared in the decision and execution of all affairs; assisted the Emperor in deciding cases; acted as his representative even in the civil jurisdiction; and received appeals in his stead. Alexander Severus afterwards gave the sanction of law to the prefect's decisions.² He was, therefore, with undetermined—and therefore unlimited—power, a sort of prime minister and chief justice; and we may say that he was in certain respects at the head of the army, being at once superintendent of military stores, inspector of arms and arsenals, and adjutant-general in military operations.³ The practice of composing the army in the field of detachments selected from the different legions, and placing at the head of these bodies of troops *duces* having no territorial command, had given occasion for this new duty of the praetorian prefects. They are the predecessors of those viziers of the sultan who hold in one hand the Emperor's signet and in the other the standard of the Empire.

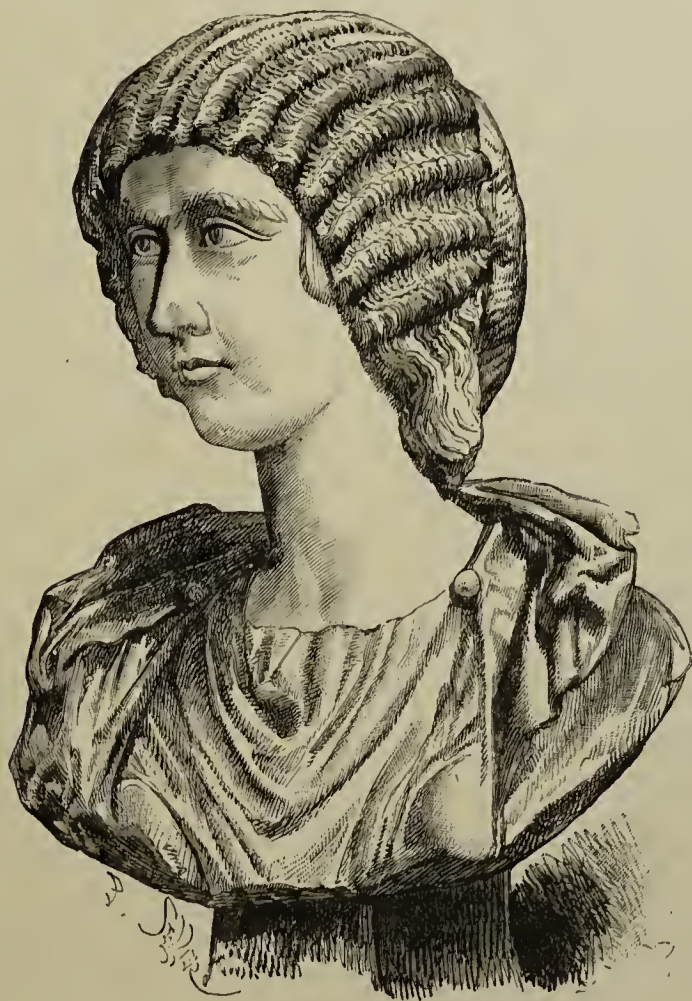
Such was the authority possessed by Perennis under Commodus, and now by Plautianus under Severus. As it was but a reflection of the imperial authority, it is proper for us to distrust the vague accusations made against the prefects of the good reigns. Rulers mindful of the public welfare might permit great severities, but they would not authorize crimes. This should be specially borne in mind in judging of Plautianus. Of low birth, but,

¹ *Socius laborum* (Tac., *Ann.* iv. 2) and *adjutor imperii*. Pomponius, in the time of Hadrian, compared the praetorian prefect to the tribune of the *celeres* under the kings and the *magister equitum* under the dictators (*Digest*, i. 2, 2, sect. 19). Herodian (v. 1) quotes a letter of Maerinus to the Senate, in which it is said that this office was very near the sovereign power, τῆς πράξεως οὐ πολὺ τι ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως βασιλικῆς ἀποδεούσης, summed up by Lampridius (*Diad.* 7) in the words *secundus imperii*. See also what is said by Charisius in the *Digest* (i. 11) and by Dion (lxxv. 14).

² In 235; cf. *Code*, i. 26, 2.

³ *Hist. Aug. Gord.* 28–29; *Trig. Tyr.* 11. Later he had the duty of levying that part of the public tax which served for the pay and support of the army (Zosimus, ii. 32), and already punished financial agents guilty of extortion (Paulus, *Senten.* v. 12, 6).

like Severus, an African, and possibly a kinsman of the Emperor,¹ he had followed the latter in all his wars at the head of the guards, and in the intervals between these expeditions he doubtless returned to Rome, where the Emperor had need of a man upon whom he could rely. The powers belonging to the office, therefore, were increased



PLAUTILLA, WIFE OF CARACALLA (MARBLE BUST IN THE LOUVRE).

by the absolute confidence which the Emperor felt in him who at this time held it.

On one occasion, however, Plautianus narrowly escaped a fatal disgrace. The order had been given to throw down the statues which the prefect had erected to himself near those of the

¹ His name was Caius Fulvius Plautianus. As the mother of Severus was Fulvia Pia, and his grandfather Fulvius Pius, Reimar (*ad* Dion, lxxv. 14) concludes that Plautianus belonged to the imperial family. In certain inscriptions it is said, *ad finis*, D.D. N.N. (*C. I. L.* vol. iii. No. 6,075; vol. v. No. 2,821); in others, *Augg. necessarius et comes per omnes expeditiones eorum* (*C. I. L.* vol. v. No. 1,074). Another inscription, No. 226, includes him in "the Divine House," and his name follows that of the Augusti, the Caesar Geta, and the Empress Julia.

imperial family, and Severus had used the formidable expression, "public enemy," which had been caught up and repeated. But



Plautianus had regained the Emperor's favor; and the ruler, so severe towards others, strove to dissipate the memory of his momentary displeasure by loading the prefect with public expressions of regard. An orator having said in the Senate: "Before Severus does any harm to Plautianus, the sky will fall," the Emperor remarked to the senators at his side that this was true. "I could not injure Plautianus," he said, "and I hope not to survive him."¹ Severus had violated, in favor of his prefect, a rule established by Augustus, twice appointing Plautianus consul;² and with the design of securing his son an experienced guide, had made his prefect the father-in-law of the designate Emperor. Dion relates

that he saw the dowry of Plautilla, "the new Juno,"³ carried into the palace, and that it was enough for fifty kings' daughters.

¹ Dion, lxxv. 15 and 16.

² Plautianus had really received only the consular ornaments; but Severus counted this honor as if it had been a real consulship (Dion, lxxv. 15; *C. I. L.* vi. 220). The rule of Augustus had already been violated. Clemens, under Domitian (*Tac., Hist.* iv. 68), and Tatianus, under Hadrian (*Spart., Hadr.* 8), had been at the same time consuls and praetorian prefects. Alexander Severus decided, contrary to the ordinance of Augustus, that the praetorian prefecture should be a senatorial office.

³ Statue in the Museum of Naples.

⁴ Νέα Ἥρα (Waddington, *Fastes de la prov. d'Asie*, p. 247).

Accordingly, the prefect had a royal retinue, and all ranks of men, the Senate, the people, and the army, vied with each other in basely flattering him. Though it was no longer permitted to erect statues to him of equal height with those of the Emperor himself, men called him the Emperor's cousin, they made oath by his fortune, and they prayed for him in the temples with all the more fervor because he seemed in no need of their prayers. Did Plautianus abuse this vast power, more dangerous in the hands of the minister than of the master? Dion accuses him of many follies and of every crime, without giving details, or else giving them too exactly. For example, the historian declares that Plautianus had stolen "the horses of the Sun, animals resembling tigers, that were kept on an island in the Red Sea." If we must explain this, it might be said that tiger-horses were zebras. But when he relates that Plautianus snatched from their homes a hundred Romans of free condition, married men and fathers of families, and subjected them to mutilation that his daughter might have a train of attendants in Oriental style, and adds, "the thing was not known until after his death," we are justified in saying that Dion allowed himself to repeat one of those foolish calumnies which gather about great men in their fall. Such an act could not have been accomplished in silence, and the prefect could never with impunity have outraged by this crime an imperial decree¹ in force at the time, or the public indignation which the wives and children of the victims would have aroused.

His great wealth caused him to be suspected of great rapine; but Severus, who had seized the heritage of the Antonines, of Niger, and of Albinus, gave a large share to Plautianus in the numerous confiscations of the reign.² This African was no more reluctant to shed blood than was his master. After the victory at Lyons he insisted on the destruction of the family of Niger, whom Severus had at first spared. Since the death of Albinus the aristocracy did indeed curse the new ruler under its breath;

¹ Dion, lxxvii. 2. Amm. Marcellinus points out that this law was still in force in the fourth century, and he esteems it very useful, *receptissima inclaruit lege* (Dom. xviii. 4).

² Herod., iii. 10. Plautianus did not have, as has been asserted, "procurators of the private domain," like those of the Emperor, scattered through the provinces to administer his estates. The *procurator ad bona Plautiani*, whom we find mentioned in the inscriptions (Or.-Henzen, No. 6,920), is a *procurator ad bona damnatorum* (*Ibid.*, Nos. 3,190, 6,519).

but it had no longer the energy to form conspiracies. Plautianus feigned or believed that such there were, and victims fell. It is not easy to see in Severus a weak ruler closing his eyes to crimes committed by his minister. If the prefect ordered unmerited punishments, the responsibility falls upon the Emperor, who, made suspicious by the Senate's conduct towards the British Caesar, approved of everything.

I have already indicated the secret of this favor; it was natural. Severus, whose feeble health warned him to take thought for the morrow, sought to secure to his sons and to the Empire the assistance of a man capable of carrying on the work he



GOLD COIN OF PLAUTILLA
AUGUSTA.¹

had himself begun; and he believed that he had made this subordinate so great that he would have no temptation to seek to become greater. The plan was marked by good sense, but passion defeated it.

The excessive prosperity of "the vice-emperor"² dazzled him. Plautianus was guilty of the imprudence of making an enemy of the Empress by perfidious insinuations against her conduct, and of the heir to the throne by the affectation of a paternal regard, whose ill-judged advice exasperated this violent youth. The marriage of Plautilla, which had seemed to consolidate his fortunes, caused their downfall. Is it possible that Julia was averse to this union? Did she share her son's feeling against the favorite whose popularity offended this Emperor of fourteen, until, animated with equal hatred against father and daughter, he expelled the latter from his bed and the former from his house? Dion does not inform us on this point; but he says that the young Augusta, prouder of her father than of her husband, had rendered herself intolerable to Caracalla, and that Plautianus, extremely exasperated against the Empress, displeased her in a thousand ways. These domestic quarrels brought about a catastrophe.

Severus had renewed and strengthened the laws against adultery, and prosecutions of this crime were frequent in Rome.³ Plautianus

¹ On the obverse the head of the Augusta; on the reverse, Concord.

² "Ὅς [Σεουήρος] οὕτως αὐτῷ ὑπέεικεν ἐς πάντα ὥστ' ἐκείνον μὲν ἐν αὐτοκράτορος αὐτὸν δὲ ἐν ἐπάρχου μοίρᾳ εἶναι (Dion, lxxv. 15).

³ Dion, lxxvi. 16. Cf. in the *Digest* (xlviii. 5, 2, sec. 3) two edicts of Severus on this subject.

attempted to involve Julia in accusations of this nature, and Dion asserts — which appears strange — that the prefect sought testimony against her even by subjecting women of rank to torture. Unable to struggle against the all-powerful minister, the Empress



THE EMPRESS JULIA DOMNA.¹

took refuge among her men of letters and philosophers; but Caracalla did not accept his mother's misfortunes with equal serenity, and his hatred of Plautianus redoubled.

Severus, alone of all the imperial household, supported the praetorian prefect. Septimius Geta, the Emperor's brother and colleague

¹ Statue of Pentelic marble found at Bengazzi (Berenice), on the coast of northern Africa. Severus was a native of this region (Louvre).

with Plautianus in the consulship of the year 203, was convinced that the latter meditated the destruction of all the imperial family, and upon his death-bed conjured his brother to save himself. The words of Geta made an impression; this was evident from the funeral honors decreed to the accuser of Plautianus, and Caracalla believed the moment propitious to destroy the minister. Three centurions, suborned by the young Augustus, came one evening to the palace and declared that Plautianus had employed them to assassinate Severus and his son; and in proof of this produced a written order to that effect, which they asserted they had received from the prefect. Severus, amazed but not convinced, sent for Plautianus. At the door of the palace the prefect was deprived of his guards, and entered the imperial presence alone. Severus spoke to him gently. "Why do you wish to destroy us," he said; "who is it that has persuaded you to this?" Plautianus denying the charge eagerly, Caracalla fell upon him, snatched away his sword, and struck him in the face, crying out: "Yes, you have sought to murder me." He would have killed the prefect on the spot, but his father prevented it; upon this the youth called upon a lictor to kill Plautianus, and, being Augustus, his word was law: the lictor obeyed. The body of Plautianus, flung out from the palace, was cast into a lane, where it lay until Severus ordered it to be interred (23d January, 204).¹

In all this matter the Emperor plays a despicable part. Through paternal affection he had suffered his friend to be murdered in his presence. On the morrow it was made clear to every one that Severus did not believe in the pretended conspiracy;² for

¹ The *Chronicon paschale* places the death of Plautianus on the 22d of January, 203. But after having spoken of the prosecution of Racius Constans, which took place after the return of Severus to Rome, — that is to say, in the year 202, — Dion (lxxv. 16) says that Plautianus remained in favor for a year longer, which brings us to the middle of 203. An Algerian inscription (L. Renier, 70) shows that he was alive August 22d, 203. To conclude, it appears from Dion (lxxvi. 3) that the catastrophe took place at the moment when the last spectators of the Palatine games were leaving the palace. These games, we know, began January 21st, and lasted three days (Marquardt, *Handb.* iv. 429-445). This gives us the 23d of January, 204, as the date of the tragedy. The story of Herodian (iii. 11 and 12), which supposes a real plot formed by Plautianus, though much more dramatic, is improbable. It tells the story as put in circulation by Caracalla, and inscriptions testify to its currency in the provinces. But Dion was at Rome; he heard everything; he was no friend to the prefect, and would not have failed to narrate the treason of Plautianus had he believed in it.

² . . . ὅτι οὐ πᾶν σφίσι (to the denouncers) πιστεύει (Dion, lxxvi. 5).

instead of dwelling on the prefect's crime in his address to the Senate, he had recourse to the usual commonplaces of philosophy, deplored human weakness, which could not support too great elevation, and accused himself of having ruined Plautianus by loading him with honors and tokens of affection. It being necessary, however, for the justification of the murder that it should appear that a plot had been discovered, certain of the prefect's most devoted friends were sent to join him in the other world.¹ His daughter and his son were banished to Lipari, where, at a later period, Caracalla caused them to be murdered.

It is not certain whether it was as a friend of Plautianus that Quintillus was put to death. He was a man of high birth, and one of the principal senators, but lived in the country, far from public affairs and intrigues. He died in the antique manner. Being condemned upon calumnious depositions, he ordered to be brought out the arti-

LAURELLED CARACALLA.²

cles he had long before prepared for his interment; and seeing that they had been injured by time: "How is this?" he said. "We have delayed too long." He burned a few grains of incense on the altar of the gods, and gave himself up to the executioner. Other senators, accused of various unknown crimes, were convicted, says Dion,³ and condemned. But the crimes of that time would not all be such in our day, as is shown by the following instance, which exhibits one of the calamities of that form of government and social organization. Apronianus, governor of Asia, was accused of employing the resources of magic to discover if the fates did

¹ Dion speaks only of the execution of Caccilius Agricola and the exile of Coeranus, who, being recalled seven years later, was the first Egyptian made senator (lxxvi. 5). Macrinus, the future Emperor, was the steward of Plautianus, and Severus took him into his own service.

² Engraved stone, amethyst of 12 mill. by 9, in the *Cabinet de France*.

³ After debate, ἀπολογησαμένους καὶ ἀλόντας (lxxvi. 7). Cincius Severus, who perished under accusation of wishing to poison the Emperor (Spart., *Sev.* 13) may have been of this number. Spartanus speaks of him as an innocent man.

not intend for him the imperial power. The thing is possible, for magic was the mania of the time. Legislation held it in such fear that these practices were made a capital crime, and Tertullian esteems it only just, since this rash curiosity supposes in all cases evil designs.¹ Apronianus was condemned. The interest of this prosecution is not in its result for the accused, but in the scene that Dion relates. "When we had read all the proofs, we found among them this deposition of an eye-witness: 'I saw a bald-headed senator leaning forward in order to see.' At these words we were in a terrible fright, for neither the witness nor the Emperor had mentioned the name. Fear was extreme among the senators whose heads or even foreheads were bald. We looked about us with anxiety, and we said: 'It is this man;' or, 'It is that.' I will not deny that my anxiety was so great that I tried with my hand to draw my hair forward over my head. The person reading, however, went on to say that this senator was clad in the *praetexta*. All eyes then turned to the aedile Baebius Marcellinus, who was completely bald-headed. He rose, and coming forward, said: 'The witness will of course recognize me if he has seen me.' The informer was called in, and looked about for some time; until at last, on a slight hint from some one, he pointed out Marcellinus. Thus convicted of being 'the bald-headed man who had looked on,' he was led out of the Senate and decapitated in the Forum before Severus had been informed of his condemnation."²

If the Emperor had known, would he have approved it? He had not designated Marcellinus in the papers sent in to the Senate, and perhaps he would have remembered that he himself, under Commodus, was in great peril by reason of a similar accusation.³

But what we have to observe is this terror among the senators; this eagerness in directing towards a man probably innocent the blow suspended over the heads of all; this haste in causing instant

¹ *Apol.* 35.

² Dion, lxxvi. 8-9. This narrative, which I have been obliged to abridge, brings to light the method of procedure: it shows that a secret written investigation was first made by the imperial secretary *a cognitionibus*; that the report contained the name of the official who had directed the investigation, the names of the witnesses, the results of the inquiry, and the statement that it had been submitted to the Emperor and was by him transmitted to the Senate. Cf. Cuq, *Le Magister sacrarum largitionum*, p. 124.

³ Sent by Commodus to the prefects of the praetorian guard; he was acquitted by them (*Spart., Sev.* 4).

execution to follow upon the sentence, thus depriving an accused person of all the guaranties of even-handed justice, and a condemned person of the benefit of that law of Tiberius requiring a delay of ten days. In all this we see that more fatal than the despotism of the Caesars was the base servility of those who surrounded the ruler, and who, not making use of existing laws to restrain him, left men no other resource against him but conspiracy.

Were there conspiracies under Severus? Certain witnesses assert that there were. His life was often in danger, says Ammianus Marcellinus,¹ and inscriptions contain thanks to the gods for having protected the Emperor and his family against the guilty machinations of the enemies of the state. Ammianus Marcellinus names only one of these plots, that attributed to Plautianus, and it is difficult for all the inscriptions (one of which is dated 208) to be explained as referring to this event alone.² Defended by the devotion of his praetorians and his legions, having two sons grown to manhood whom a conspirator must also strike at the same time with their father, Severus had nothing to fear. Between the death of Plautianus and the departure of the Emperor for Britain, Dion mentions no other condemnations than those of which we have just spoken. As this historian does not believe in the treason of Plautianus, and mentions no other cases, we are authorized in saying that no other accusations were made, and that this source of the greatest iniquities was dried up.

Severus has, however, the reputation of being extremely cruel; he merits it by reason of the executions which he caused to follow each civil war, and the condemnations that he allowed to be pronounced in virtue of odious laws, — which, however, have had their counterparts in modern legislation. But if we examine closely the vague accusations of writers not contemporary with Severus, we no

¹ xxix. 1. He mentions, it is true, but one (and that a questionable) fact, — the order given by Plautianus to a centurion to assassinate the Emperor.

² Guérin, *Voyage archéol. en Tunisie*, ii. 62: . . . *Ob conservatam eorum salutem, detectis insidiis hostium publicorum*. Inscr. of the year 208. Another (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.* No. 2,160), which seems to allude to some plot fortunately discovered, is expressed in nearly the same words. In No. 5,497 of Orelli, we read: *Quod . . . Domini nostri . . . sustulerunt omnes parricidiales insidiatores*. It is impossible to say to whom Tertullian's language applies: . . . *Qui nunc scelestarum partium socii aut plausores quotidie revelantur, post vindemiam parricidarum recematis superstes* (*Ap.* 35). Are these survivors of "parricidal" conspiracies accomplices of Niger and Albinus, or other guilty persons? In any case, we see that Tertullian has no compassion for these victims of civil wars or plots, and regards them as criminals.

longer find ascribed to him that gloomy tyranny which the name of this Emperor suggests. Spartianus, for example, reproaches him with many murders in the interest of his cupidity; Dion,

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.¹

on the contrary, expressly says that "he put no man to death for the sake of money."² Another ancient writer³ speaks of con-

¹ Bust found at Otricoli (Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 290).

² lxxvi. 16; but he reproaches the Emperor with having been unscrupulous in respect to methods of enriching himself, which is confirmed by no known fact, save his forced adoption by the Antonines.

³ Zosimus, i. 8: . . . *περὶ τοὺς ἀμαρτάνοντας ἀπαραίτητος*, etc.

fiscations only "in case of the wicked who had been convicted," and the great Christian apologist of that day considers all these persons as justly condemned. Have we not besides witnesses more credible than the miserable scribes of Diocletian,¹—men who by the mere fact that they worked with Severus testify in his favor? When we find Paulus and Ulpian sitting in the imperial council² and Papinian in the praetorship, we have a right to say that there was wisdom in the government and justice in the administration.

The Emperor who selected such servants was himself no less good as a jurisconsult than able as a general. In his council men spoke freely. Paulus argued learnedly against him, and in publishing his collection of the imperial decisions, criticised them with a freedom that does honor both to the councillor and to the ruler. By common accord Severus is represented as simple in his dress, sober in his habits, with dignity in his private life,³ and a respect for himself and for his rank. While legate in Africa he ordered one of his fellow-citizens of Leptis, who had embraced him in the open street, to be beaten; and when Emperor he seems to have so lived that he could prosecute offences against morals without any man having ground to reproach him for being less indulgent to others than to himself. There have been made against him no charges, except one in early youth which has been proved false,⁴ and another of later date, equally unworthy of credence.

He allowed no influence to the Caesarians,—that is to say, his freedmen and the imperial household,—nor even to his brother, who expected to enjoy a large share of power, but was promptly sent away into his province of Dacia: it was a rare case of prudence in an absolute ruler, and was the more valued on that account. The courtiers, whom he could not dismiss, had very little influence

¹ Spartianus and Capitolinus wrote by order of Diocletian.

² Two other eminent lawyers, Tryphonius and Arrius Menander, were also members of the council (*Digest*, xlix. 14, 50, and v. 4, 11, 2).

³ Spartianus says (*Sev.* 4) that during his government in Lugdunensis, *Gallis ob severitatem et honorificentiam et abstinentiam tantum quantum nemo dilectus est*. The same writer speaks of an accusation of adultery made against him and judged at Rome by the proconsul Didius Julianus. A proconsul, however, could not judge at Rome, and the error on one point throws doubt upon the other.

⁴ Höfner, who discusses this question in his *Untersuch. zur Gesch. des . . . Severus*, pp. 49–51, says: *Die ganze Geschichte wird nichts anderes sein, als eine gehässige Erfindung*. The reasons assigned by him and M. Roulez seem decisive. Concerning the upright character of Severus, see *Hist. Aug., Tyr. Trig.* 5.

over this Emperor, scornful of the pomp of power, disdaining the honors which the Senate decreed to him, and saying to the Conscript Fathers: "Have in your hearts the affection for me that you parade in your decrees." After his Parthian campaign he refused the triumph, under pretext that the gout rendered him unable to sit upright in the chariot; but if it were a question of inspecting an army or a province, he traversed the whole Empire. He was insensible to the evil that was said of him, and thus could see and act with calmness. A senator whose biting wit had more than once been employed against the Emperor, dared to say to him, when Severus caused himself to be inscribed in the family of the Antonines: "I congratulate you, Caesar, on finding a father." The epigram was transparent; but Severus appeared not to understand it, and its author suffered no loss of the imperial favor. Another senator, a pitiless satirist, had been for certain biting words held under arrest in his palace, — somewhat as in France, after the prosecution of a newspaper editor for libel, the offender is confined in a private asylum. This man continued to attack all men, Emperors included. Severus at last commanded him to be brought into the imperial presence, and swore to him that he would cut off his head. "You can cut it off if you choose," said the incorrigible offender; "but I swear to you that so long as it remains on my shoulders, neither you nor I can be its master." Severus laughed, and the satirist, who ridiculed himself also, was set at liberty.¹ Easy-tempered towards his adversaries when his own safety and the public order did not require severity, the Emperor was a faithful and devoted friend towards those who had gained his affection; he loaded them with gifts and honors, cared for them if they were ill, and kept a supply of the expensive remedies that Galen prepared for him to distribute among them. He thus cured Antipater, his secretary for Greek letters, also the son of one Piso, and the matron Arria.² Conduct such as this does not reveal a savage disposition.

¹ Dion, lxxvi. 6, 9, 16, and lxxvii. 10.

² Galen, *Theriaca*, vol. xiv. p. 218 of Kühn's edition. This store of remedies, found in the palace after Caracalla's death, gave rise to suspicions; the drugs, believed to be poison, were solemnly burned, and Maerinus regarded the son of Severus as a poisoner. The murderer of Geta's twenty thousand partisans had no need of this discreet method of ridding himself of his adversaries.

All his time was devoted to the public service, for he was anxious to neglect nothing which might promote the success of his enterprises.¹ Dion gives us the employ of his day: "At daylight he began his work, interrupting it only to take a walk, during which he conversed on public affairs with those whom he called to accompany him. When the hour arrived for the opening of his tribunal, he went thither, unless it were a holiday, and remained until noon. He allowed to the parties all the time that they needed, and to us who sat with him, permitted great liberty of opinion. After the hearing was over, he went out on horseback, or took exercise in some other form, and then took his bath. He dined alone or with his sons, then slept a while, causing himself to be awakened to walk, accompanied by Greek and Latin scholars. In the evening he took a second bath, and supped in company with those who chanced to be present; for he specially invited no one, and reserved sumptuous entertainments for days when he could not avoid them."² This well-regulated life shows a man who must have loved order in everything.

The Empress was worthy of him. The daughter of Julius Bassianus, priest of the Sun at Emesa,³ she was living in that city at the time when Severus commanded a legion in Syria; and perhaps the recollection of her beauty, as well as the fact that an astrological prediction had declared that she was to be a sovereign's wife, decided him to ask her in marriage. There is ascribed to her a prudence which, in this masculine intellect, was united with audacity. It is she, we are assured, who decided Severus to assume the purple.⁴ In return, he showed her great respect. He took her with him on his expeditions; and as he allowed himself to be called in inscriptions *dominus noster*, "the master," she was called *domna*, "the mistress,"⁵ and the further

¹ ἐπιμελής μὲν πάντων ὧν πράξαι ἤθελεν (Dion, lxxvi. 16). Herodian (iii. 32 and 43) shows him very assiduous in his public duties.

² Dion, lxxvi. 17.

³ She was born in 170, in modest circumstances, ἐκ δημοτικοῦ γένους (Dion, lxxviii. 24). The priesthood of Elagabalus at Emesa was, however, hereditary, and its high priests had been called kings up to the time of Vespasian (Dion, liv. 9). Domitian was the Emperor who began the imperial coinage at Emesa. Iamblichus, a neo-Platonic philosopher of the fourth century, claimed descent from this royal house.

⁴ At least Capitolinus (*Alb.* 3) says of Severus: . . . *Illorum* (Albinus and Niger) *utrumque bello oppressisse, maxime precibus uxoris adductus.*

⁵ The Romans were able to give this meaning to the word *domna*; but according to Suidas

title was given her, mother of the camps, and of the Senate and the country, and even the whole Roman people.¹



THE EMPRESS JULIA PIA DOMNA.²

This Empress has in history the sad notoriety of being the mother of Caracalla, and later authors, collecting the evil reports current among this people, "whose tongues were ever in revolt,"³

(s. v. *Δόμνος*) the word was a Syrian proper name, and everything seems to confirm this opinion of Suidas.

¹ Orelli, No. 4,945, and L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, *passim*. Herzberg (*Gesch. Griechenl.* ii. 422) shows by many inscriptions the popularity of Julia Domna among the Greeks, who honored her as "a new Demeter." In respect to coins, see Cohen, iii. 333 *et seq.*

² Bust found at Rome (Vatican, Rotunda, No. 554).

³ Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, i. 17, and *Apol.* 35: *Ipsos Quirites, ipsam vernaculam . . . plebem convenio, an alicui Caesari suo parcat illa lingua Romana.*

have reproached her with many immoralities; but they also accuse her of conspiring against the Emperor. Dion speaks of neither accusation; and the absurdity of the second throws doubt upon the former, even if we do not consider that her intellectual tastes, her four



JULIA DOMNA,
MOTHER AUGUSTA,
MOTHER OF THE
SENATE, MOTHER OF
THE COUNTRY.⁴

children,¹ and her rank would be likely to protect her from going astray. She had an inquiring mind, directed towards the great problems of life, for she was ill-satisfied with the ideas and beliefs at that time current in the world. In the palace she had gathered about her a circle³ of intellectual



JULIA DOMNA,
"MOTHER OF THE
CAMPS."²

men, among whom all subjects were discussed, which perhaps gave to a contemporary the idea of his Banquet of Learned Men (*Deipno-sophistae*).⁵ She was not offended at being called Julia the Philosopher.⁶ There is reason to believe that Diogenes Laërtius dedicated to her his history of Greek philosophers,⁷ and it is certain that she employed Philostratus to write for her the life of Apollonius of Tyana, to whom the son of Severus consecrated a *heroon*.⁸ All-powerful during her son's reign,

¹ Her two sons, and the two daughters of whom we know nothing. Eckhel, vii. 195: . . . *Tulit quoque liberos sexus muliebris*, "whom Severus gave in marriage after he became Emperor" (Tillemont, iii. 592).

² The Empress veiled, holding a patera over an altar; in front of her, three military standards (Cohen, No. 176).

³ . . . τοῦ περὶ κύκλον (Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* i. 3). . . τοῖς περὶ τὴν Ἰουλίαν γεωμέτραις τε καὶ φιλοσόφοις (*ibid.* ii. 30).

⁴ Reverse of a large bronze, Cohen, No. 168.

⁵ This form of literary composition was of ancient Greek origin; Plato set the example of it, which Lucian followed. It is not certain, therefore, that Athenaeus was inspired by what passed at the court of Severus. Still, among his guests Athenaeus places Ulpian and Galen, two intimates of the imperial palace, and the entertainment is represented as taking place in Rome, where it is given by the wealthy Larensius.

⁶ . . . τῆς φιλοσόφου Ἰουλίας (Philostratus, *ibid.* ii. 30).

⁷ The book was dedicated to a woman who greatly admired the Academy; but her name, with the dedication, is lost, and we cannot say whether it was Arria or the Empress Julia.

⁸ Dion, lxxvii. 18. Many cities in Greece and Asia had already made a divinity of Apollonius (Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* i. 5), and Aurelian erected altars to him (Vopiscus, *Aur.* 24). The Christians themselves believed in his miracles and in the oracles given by his statue: this is explained by the theory of daemons. See, in the series of Saint Jerome's works, the twenty-sixth question and its answer.

she was still a student of philosophy while ruling the Empire,¹ and preserved her intellectual tastes until her death. Indeed these tastes lingered upon the Palatine after her time; a half century later the Empress Salonina took pleasure in conversing with Plotinus.

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA.²

With Julia Domna were her sister and her two nieces, also famous for their beauty, — Julia Maesa, who later was able with her own hand to avenge her race by overthrowing an Emperor, and twice caused the purple to be conferred on boys whom she had selected; Julia Soaemias, who is represented on coins as the Heavenly Virgin, but whom Lampridius accuses of mundane frailties, — a reputation due perhaps to her son Elagabalus; and third, the high-minded Mamaea, — doubly mother to Alexander, by blood and by the education she gave this young prince, in whom men delighted to recognize a new Marcus Aurelius. Deeply interested in the great movement of the intellectual world of her time, Mamaea desired, when she heard of Origen, to know the most learned Christian of his time; and as the Empress Julia Domna ordered to be written for her the marvellous history of that Pythagorean ascetic, Apollonius of Tyana, called in those days an incarnation of the god Proteus, so her niece sought to learn from the “man of brass”³ those strange doctrines which led men rejoicing to martyrdom.

JULIA MAMAEA
(GOLD COIN).

Into this intelligent group we have the right to introduce three men whose names posterity never mentions but with respect, — Papinian, a relative of Julia Domna, who either owed to her his fortune or else made hers;⁴ Ulpian, also a fellow-countryman of the illustrious Syrian ladies of the imperial household; and Paulus,

¹ . . . μετὰ τούτων ἔτι ἐφιλοσόφει (Dion, lxxvi. 18).

² On a medallion in the *Cabinet de France*.

³ Ἀδαμάντιος (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.* vi. 14). This was the name which his contemporaries gave him. In respect to his relations with Mamaea, see the same author (*ibid.* vi. 21).

⁴ . . . *Et, ut aliqui loquuntur, ad fin.* (Spart., *Car.* 8). Papinian, like Julia, was a Syrian, and from his youth one of the Emperor's friends. The marriage with Julia was made . . . *interventu amicorum* (Spart., *Sev.* 3).

who together with Ulpian was a member of the supreme council.¹

In the presence of the Empress, these grave personages forgot the courts of law, and remembered only what of their profound learning was suited to an intellectual conversation. Sometimes verses of Oppianus were read aloud, which the Emperor had paid for with their weight in gold;² or those which Gordian himself, afterwards an Emperor, was writing at this time to extol the Antonine³ family, where the new dynasty sought its ancestors. Philostratus, a frequent visitor, recited in the palace his *Heroicos*, representing Caracalla as Achilles; Aelian, famous in that time for the sweetness of his style and for his profound piety, doubtless



JULIA MAESA.⁴

was admitted to relate some of his *Varia Historia*⁵ and Galen,

¹ It cannot be affirmed that Ulpian and Paulus were great friends. The former never quotes the latter, and Paulus mentions Ulpian only once in the (*Digest* xix. 1, i. 43). Fragments from Ulpian, however, form a third part, and those from Paulus a sixth part of the *Pandects*.

² The poem on the chase is dedicated to Caracalla: . . . τὸν μεγάλη μεγάλη φυτήσατο Δόμνα Σβήρῳ (*De Venat.* i. 4).

³ In thirty books, called the *Antoniniad*, he had sung of Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius. Capitolinus says (*Gord. tres*, 3): . . . *Declamavit audientibus etiam imperatoribus suis*.

⁴ Statue found at Rome near the Porta Capena (Capitoline Gallery, No. 56).

⁵ The Empress took Philostratus with her on her journeys. Aelian was established at Rome permanently; and his reputation of writing Greek with great purity gave him the name of Μελίγλωστος, which must have opened to him the gates of the Palatine, where Greek was more in favor than Latin. Cf. Lampridius, *Alex.*: . . . *Nec valde amavit Latinam facundiam* (3) . . . *et librum in mensa et legebat, sed Graece magis* (34).

whose noble words we have already quoted,¹—words certainly more than once repeated in the imperial circle,—discoursed there with charming enthusiasm on science and philosophy, especially when he



JULIA SOAEMIAS AS VENUS.²

encountered Sereñus Sammonicus, one of Geta's friends, who dipped into medicine and must have been able to draw many curious facts from the sixty-two thousand books of his library.³

¹ See p. 404.

² Marble statue in the Vatican found at Palestrina (Praeneste), on the site of the forum. The hair seems to be fitted to the head like a wig. The Amor placed beside the Venus is stretched upon a dolphin (*Museo Pio Clem.* vol. ii. pl. 51).

³ Sammonicus wrote in verse on the subject of medicine, and dedicated some of his treatises to Severus and Caracalla (Macrob., *Saturn.* III. xvi. 6). Geta read his books assiduously, *familiarissimos habuit* (Spart., *Geta*, 5).

The Emperor took pleasure in these intellectual discussions, for this stern soldier loved letters and desired to understand all learning.¹ Before attaining the imperial dignity, he had passed in the schools of Athens, *causa studiorum*, a period when he was in disgrace at Rome;² and Galen tells us that the Emperor had a special esteem for a great Roman lady "because she read Plato."³ This Arria must also have made one in the imperial circle. It was the prototype of those Italian courts of the fifteenth century, where Plato lived again, and ladies of the highest rank listened to learned dissertations on a world which was also seeking to regenerate itself. But in Florence men were coming out into the full day, while in the Rome of Severus, notwithstanding equal mental curiosity, they wandered in the midst of confusing twilight.

GALEN, PHYSICIAN AND PHILOSOPHER.⁴

¹ *Philosophiae ac dicendi studiis satis deditus, doctrinae quoque nimis cupidus* (Spart., *Ser.* 18 and 1); . . . *cunctis liberalium deditus studiis* (Aur. Vict., *De Cacs.* 20). *Civilibus studiis clarus fuit et litteris doctus, philosophiae ad plenum adeptus* (Eutropius, viii. 19).

² Spart., *Ser.* 3. He took pleasure in hearing all the famous sophists of the time (Philostratus, *Vitae Soph.* ii. 27, 3).

³ Galen's *Works*, xiv. 218, Kuhn's ed. ⁴ Visconti, *Icon. grecq.* vol. i. 1st part, p. 168.



GOLD COIN OF SOAEMIAS.

II. — LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION ; PAPINIAN.

A RULER is judged also by the counsellors he selects. I have mentioned Papinian among the intimates of the palace. The great jurisconsult had been the friend of Severus since the youth of both, and after the latter's accession to the Empire he appointed Papinian *magister libellorum*.¹ The duties of his office obliged the chief secretary to settle the doubts of judges, to reply to questions from governors, and to attend to petitions of private individuals. These rescripts, prepared for special cases, often formed exceptions to the common law. They broadened previous legislation, and infused into it that spirit of justice which was manifested by the jurisconsults. The rescripts of Papinian have this character especially.² He was a man of clear and penetrating intellect, in whose upright soul what is legal and what is honest were identified, and an elegant writer, whose works became classics and were employed as text-books in the schools of law.³ The code published two centuries later (439 A. D.) by two Christian Emperors, places him above all the other Roman jurisconsults.⁴

After the death of Plautianus, Severus gave to Papinian the office of praetorian prefect, reverting at the same time to the often interrupted but very ancient custom of sharing this important

¹ . . . *Amicissimum imperatori* (Spart., *Car.* 8). *Digest*, xx. 5, 12 pr.

² See p. 353. Tertullian (*Apolog.* 4) recognizes this openly: *Nonne et vos quotidie, experimentis illuminantibus tenebras antiquitatis, totam illam veterem et squalentem silvam legum novis principalium rescriptorum et edictorum securibus rustatis et caeditis*. This is the same legislative labor which England, heir of the Romans' practical sense, is carrying on in India, where she prudently waits, before making laws, until interested parties claim their rights and experience reveals needs. In one of his books, for instance, Papinian restrains the testamentary authority of the father, refusing him the right to put into his will a clause, *quam senatus aut princeps improbant . . . nam quae facta laedunt pietatem, existimationem, verecundiam nostram et, ut generaliter dixerim, contra bonos mores fiunt nec facere nos posse credendum est* (*Digest*, xxviii. 7, 15). Besides Ulpian, Paulus, and Marcian, there were at this time living Callistratus, of whose works ninety-nine fragments are contained in the *Pandects*, and two members of the council, Cl. Tryphonius and Arrius Menander, who also contributed to the *Pandects*. The reign of Severus, with still another renowned lawyer, Tertullianus, continues, therefore, the flourishing period of Roman jurisprudence.

³ For students of the third year, *Papinianistae*. Spartianus (*Sev.* 21) calls it *juris asylum et doctrinae legalis thesaurum*.

⁴ *Cod. Theod.* i. 4: *Lex unica de responsis prudentium*.

duty between two or even three persons.¹ This usage, contrary to all the military institutions of the Empire, was required by the importance of the office and the variety of talents it demanded.

Papinian had for colleague a soldier, Maecius Laetus; and when we see at the head of the army the valiant and able defender of Nisibis,² and at the head of the civil administration the jurisconsult of whom an old writer says, "his love for justice and his understanding of it were equal," we must feel sure that the state was well served by these two men, who for eight years remained as much the friends as the ministers of the Emperor. Unfortunately, we have but little information in respect to their labors.

The legislative work of Severus was, however, considerable: the fragments of his rescripts surpass in number those of his most active predecessors. "He made many excellent laws," says Aurelius Victor, and Tertullian adds, "useful laws;" for he congratulates the Emperor, whom he calls "the most conservative of rulers,"³ on having reformed the Papian-Poppaean Law, "which was almost a whole code in itself."⁴ Unfortunately, there exists scarcely anything of this legislation, and most of the rescripts of Severus which remain to us are merely applications of early law employed by the jurisconsults in defining jurisprudence.⁵ In respect to the history of Roman legislation, these rescripts, therefore, have little importance. But they have much in reference to political history, for they show in what spirit this Emperor caused the laws to be executed; and this spirit is one of benevolent equity, which we are bound to keep in remembrance: *benignissime rescripsit*, says a jurisconsult. He himself marked this character of his administration when, in a speech which he caused his son to read to the

¹ Herod., iii. 8. In the reign of Caligula we find two praetorian prefects (Suet., *Cal.* 56), and also two in the time of Nero (Plut., *Galba*, 8; Tac., *Hist.* iv. 2) and under Antoninus.

² See p. 505. An inscription of May 28, 205, shows them both praetorian prefects (Or.-Henzen, No. 5,603).

³ *Legum conditor longe aequabilium* (Aur. Victor, *De Caes.* 20). *Constantissimus principum* (Tert., *Apol.* i. 4).

⁴ The Christians desired the abrogation of this law, which was decreed by Constantine (*Code*, viii. 58, 1).

⁵ Many imperial rescripts may be compared to the decrees of the French Court of Cassation, whose dates do not determine the date of the legislative provision sanctioned by the decree, nor even that of the commencement of jurisprudence in respect to the point in question, but attest that this provision and this jurisprudence were in force at the period where history meets them; and this suffices to justify our citations.

Senate, he called upon the Conscript Fathers to soften the rigor of the laws.¹ "If a man," says a great legal authority of the time, "be accused of crimes which fall under two different penal ordinances, one milder, the other more severe, the former is that which should be applied in the case;"² and acts corresponded to words.

To put one's treasures in a secure place, it was the custom to deposit them in a temple; and a theft from the sacred building brought with it the penalty of sacrilege. Severus allowed only the *actio furti* against those who, without touching the sacred objects, had carried off the possessions of a private person. He however condemned to exile a senator's son who had caused to be carried into a temple a chest in which a man had been concealed, so that when night had come and the doors were closed, he could steal at leisure.³

In cases of treason, the property, both present and prospective, of the condemned, fell to the public treasury: the Emperor decided that the sons of the criminal should retain the rights which their father had had over his freedmen; and this was esteemed a great indulgence.⁴ While Severus did not abolish the unjust, but profoundly Roman, law of confiscation, at least he modified its rigor; and his councillors established, in all cases, that the fault of the father was not to fall upon the son, and that illegitimate children, those born of adulterous or even incestuous connections, should not, on account of the stain on their birth, be excluded from public honors.⁵ One of his rescripts established a new mode of confiscation against which no objection can be made. "The husband," he said, "who does not avenge his murdered wife shall lose whatever of her dowry would fall to him."⁶ He condemned to temporary exile the woman who, by practising abortion, deprived her husband of the hope of children.⁷

¹ . . . *Ut aliquid laxaret (senatus) ex juris rigore (Digest, xxiv. 1, 32 pr.)*. It was on a special point, namely, of gifts between married persons; but the same spirit is found in other rescripts. In one of Alexander Severus we read: *Quae a D. Antonino, patre meo et quae a me rescripta sunt, eum juris et aequitatis rationibus congruunt (Code, ii. 1, 8)*.

² *Mitior lex erit sequenda (Ulpian, Digest, xlviii. 19, 32)*.

³ *Digest, xiv. ii. 13, 12*.

⁴ *Digest, xxxvii. 14, 4, and xlviii. 4, 9*. In speaking of this rescript, Marcian uses the expression: *benignissime rescripsit*.

⁵ *Digest, l. 2, 2, sec. 2: Ne patris nota filius macularetur. Ibid. l. 2, 6: Non impedienda dignitas ejus qui nihil admisit*.

⁶ *Digest, xlix. 14, 27*.

⁷ *Digest, xlvii. ii. 4*.

To sell a statue of the Emperor or to strike it with a stone was a *crimen majestatis* which had cost many men their lives; Severus authorized the sale of unconsecrated statues, and admitted the excuse of accident.¹

No sentence was to be pronounced against an absent man, equity forbidding that a judgment should be given until both sides had been heard.²

If the accuser should desist, he was forbidden to resume his accusation.³ The same is the law in France when the prosecuting officer abandons the case.

The accused person was to be brought before the judge of the place where the crime had been committed.⁴ There also he was to suffer the penalty,⁵ so that the witnesses of the offence might also witness the expiation; and modern law makes the same provision.

In the case of banishment, the penalty existed after death, and the corpse of the criminal was condemned also to be exiled from the paternal tomb. Severus did not repeal this law, but he frequently granted a dispensation from it.⁶

Wards were often robbed by faithless guardians, and he prohibited the latter from alienating the property of minors without authorization from the urban praetor or the governor.⁷ We have similar prohibitions.

Let us also remember to his honor the rescript which allowed the Jews to be candidates for municipal honors without renouncing their religion.

It is not certain that Severus greatly ameliorated the condition of slaves; but at least after his time they were much more secure in the possession of the advantages they had already obtained, by the application which he made, in certain circumstances, of provisions favorable to them.

¹ *Digest*, xlviii. 4, 5, sec. 1: *lapide incerto*.

² *Digest*, xlviii. 17, 1. Absence did not prevent, however, a favorable verdict, at least in some cases. Thus, the praetor could declare a slave free to whom liberty had been given by testament, even when he did not present himself to claim it (*Senatus-consultum* of the year 182, under Commodus; *Digest*, xl. 5, 28, sec. 4).

³ *Ibid.* 16, 15, sec. 4.

⁴ *Digest*, xlviii. 2, 22.

⁵ *Digest*, xlix. 16, 3 pr.

⁶ *Digest*, xlviii. 24, 2: . . . *multis petentibus indulsit*.

⁷ *Digest*, xxvii. 9, 1. This important matter of wardship was regulated in all its details by an *oratio Severi* read in the Senate on the ides of June, 195.

It was forbidden to a master to institute an action against his freedman by reason of a fault which the latter had committed while in a state of servitude; it was also forbidden to all to reproach a woman with the wages of disgrace which she had been forced to earn before her enfranchisement; it was also forbidden to women to fight in the arena.¹

If a slave owed his liberty to a forged *codicillum*, he was to keep his freedom, but to pay twenty *solidi* to the heir,² — a decision which satisfied at the same time both law and equity, leaving to the slave the benefit of a lucky accident, and compensating the heir for the diminution of his inheritance.

The Emperor even admitted to public office the children of mixed condition: "Prevent not Titius, the son of a free woman and a father yet in slavery, from attaining the decurionate in his city."³

A man condemned was said to be *servus poenae*. What was to be the condition of the slave sent to the mines when the Emperor's pardon took him thence? The condemned man, said Severus, was the slave of the penalty; the penalty being cancelled, the man is free.⁴ The method of enfranchisement is curious, a capital sentence resulting in giving the slave his liberty! The slave's penal sentence had, it was considered, placed the state in the master's position towards him, and the master could not recover his rights by the fact that the Emperor had pardoned the *servus poenae*. This was a rigorous application of principles already established, which probably had been sometimes violated; and the

¹ *Digest*, iv. 4, 11; iii. 2, 24; Dion, lxxv. 16.

² *Digest*, xl. 4, 47.

³ *Digest*, l. 2, 9 pr.

⁴ *Digest*, xlviii. 19, 8, sect. 12. This rescript belongs to the reign of Caracalla, who in his civil laws followed out the spirit of his father's legislation. Ulpian, who reports this rescript, adds: *Rectissime rescripsit*. Alexander Severus applied the same principle to the son, who, under similar conditions, was set free from the *patria potestas* (*Code*, ix. 51, 6). The following are also rescripts of Caracalla: The slave cannot be enfranchised until after he has given account of his stewardship (*Digest*, xl. 12, 34; see p. 7 of this volume). The patron who does not maintain his freedman loses his rights over him (*Digest*, xxxvii. 14, 5, sect. 1; this rescript is possibly of the reign of Alexander Severus). Banishment involved the confiscation of property. Two persons about to be exiled, a son and a mother, asked permission to levy each upon his and her individual property, which was about to be taken from them, enough to secure, the mother to the son, and the son to the mother, the bare necessities of life (*ad victum necessaria*). "I cannot change a law," the Emperor replied, "but your request is a pious one; it shall be done as you desire" (*Digest*, xlviii. 22, 16). He condemned to be beaten with rods and sent into exile for three years those who pillaged shipwrecked persons (*Digest*, xlvii. 9, 4, etc.).

Emperor, being asked for his opinion on the subject, confirmed them anew.

The prefect of the city had now the entire criminal jurisdiction in Rome and as far as the hundredth mile, excepting over senators,



SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (MUSEUM OF THE LOUVRE).

who were amenable to the Senate. Severus ordered this officer to receive the complaints of slaves against their cruel or profligate masters, and to keep watch that none should be compelled to a life of shame.¹

¹ . . . *Officium praef. urbi datum . . . ut mancipia tueatur, ne prostituuntur* (*Digest*, i. 12, 1, sect. 8). . . . *Ut servos de dominis querentes audiat si saevitiam, si duritiam, si famem,*

It was not unfrequently the case, especially in the army, that a slave belonged to several masters at once. Severus decided that if one of the latter enfranchised the slave owned in common, the co-proprietor or proprietors should be obliged to sell to the slave their share at a price fixed by the praetor, so that he might thus obtain his full liberty. This rule lasted until the time of Justinian. Contrary to Hadrian's rescript, Severus did not allow the common slave to be put to the torture in case of a prosecution of one of the masters; and calling to mind that the law did not permit, save in certain defined cases, confessions against the master to be wrung from slaves by torture, he added: "Much less should their denunciations of their masters be received."¹ This principle of domestic discipline had been so often violated under the bad Emperors that the restoration of its legal authority was entirely due to Severus.

In fiscal prosecutions it had been usual to compel the accused person to prove that his fortune had been legitimately acquired; Severus decided that it was the business of the informer to prove the justice of his accusation. This also is one of the rules of our legislation. Lastly, he uttered this principle, that whenever there were doubts in regard to the meaning of the law, precedents should be examined, or custom, which in such case should have the force of law. Local custom, therefore, had not been abolished at the beginning of the third century.²

Severus, who took pleasure in directing the law towards milder constructions, was rigorous towards all forms of disorder. He increased the severities of the Julian law in respect to cases of adultery, — but without great profit to public morals, which cannot be corrected by articles of a code.³ But neither was he indulgent towards his own interests; he rejected any legacy where the simplest

qua eos premant; si obseoenitatem in qua eos compulerent vel compellant (ibid.). The slave, however, could not publicly accuse his master. Severus wished to constrain the latter to humanity, while not destroying domestic discipline (*Digest*, xlix. 14, 2, sect. 6). An ordinance of Commodus had decreed that the enfranchised person who did not come to the help of his patron in sickness or destitution should be given back into slavery (*Digest*, xxv. 3, 6, sect. 1). In article 12 of the *Digest*, book i., Ulpian gives a summary of the letter of Severus, which is, so to speak, the constituent charter of the urban prefecture.

¹ *Code*, vii. 7, 1; *Digest*, xlviii. 18, 17, sect. 2; *ibid.* sect. 3: *Plurium servum in nullius caput torqueri posse*; *Code*, ix. 14, 1; *Digest*, xlviii. 18, 1, sect. 16.

² *Digest*, xlix. 14, 26; *ibid.* i. 3, 38; see p. 47 of the present volume.

³ When he became consul, Dion found three thousand accusations entered on the lists.

formality had been omitted, using those words which are so honorable in the mouth of an absolute ruler: "It is true that I am above the laws; but it is with and by the laws that I desire to live." ¹

The law forbade public officers to take a wife, or even suffer their sons to marry, in the province where they were on duty. However, marriages of this class occurred from time to time. To prevent all pressure upon provincial families in case these unions had been prompted by selfish motives, Severus decided that an official who had taken to wife a rich heiress living in his province should not inherit from her. ²

Billeting of military and civil functionaries was a burden to the provincials, and often there was much abuse under this head; Severus therefore directed the governors to observe the rules strictly. ³

Many of these provisions were not new, but Severus made them his own by repeating them; and some of them prove that the Roman world was steadily effecting by itself the greatest social evolution of antiquity,—the slave ceasing to be a thing, and becoming a person.

We must notice, on the other hand, the decline of the municipal *régime* which was now beginning. The kind of heredity established by Augustus in respect to the Senate at Rome had by degrees extended itself over the Empire. The sons of decurions, doubtless in limited number, *praetextati*, sat in the local senate, but did not vote until after their twenty-fifth year and after having occupied some public office, and when death or some sentence of punishment had made a vacancy. ⁴ Paulus, one of the Emperor's council, wrote about this time: "He who is not a member of the curia cannot be appointed duumvir, because it is forbidden to plebeians to aspire to the honors of the decurionate." On the other hand, his eminent contemporaries, Ulpian and Papinian, admitted that a man of the people might arrive at the Senate, not by the *lectio*, which no longer made the quinquennial duumvir, but

¹ *Licet legibus soluti sumus, attamen legibus vivimus* (*Inst.* ii. 17, sect. 8).

² *Digest*, xxxiv. 9, 2, sect. 1, and xxxiii. 2, 57, 63.

³ *Ibid.* i. 16, 4, *prooem.*

⁴ At Canusium, in 223, there were twenty-five *praetextati* to a hundred decurions (Papinian, in the *Digest*, l. 2, 6, sect. 1).

by the *cooptatio*. But for these authorities also the sons of the decurions formed a privileged class.¹ We are at a period of transition, therefore, when the early liberties were becoming effaced without having completely disappeared. The curia is not yet shut against new men, but the municipal aristocracy draws its lines closer every year, and the movement of concentration is accelerated. Already Ulpian is of opinion that the decurion who abandons his city should be brought back to it by the governor of the province, that he may fulfil the duties which are incumbent upon him;² and Septimius Severus prescribed to all his agents to act with extreme circumspection in the imposition of new municipal taxes, and to his proconsuls and his legates to keep rigorous watch over public works and over illegal associations.³ "There is nothing in the province," says the counsellor of Severus, "which cannot be executed by the governor."⁴ Centralization was gaining at the expense of local vitality. But later we shall see it was less the rulers who encroached than the towns which made the encroachments necessary.

As we read all these rescripts,—and there are many others of which I have not spoken,—we are forced to acknowledge that if Septimius Severus was not the reformer for whom the Empire had been looking since the death of Augustus, he was at least a ruler attentive to the needs of the time.

Of all these needs the most imperious—since the horrible confusion which began under Commodus, and continued five years after the close of his reign—was public order. To have done with civil wars, with military revolts, with armed brigandage, and to put every man and everything in the proper place, required no common energy; and this energy Severus possessed. "He cor-

¹ *Digest*, l. 2, sect. 2, and 7, sects. 2-7.

² *Digest*, l. 2, 1. Rescripts of Severus exist forbidding the cities to lay too heavy burdens on the rich, but also to constrain to the execution of their promises those who had made a formal engagement to construct some work of public utility or decoration (*Digest*, l. 12, 6, sects. 2 and 3); in respect to the recall of the doctor or professor appointed by the city (*Digest*, xxvii. 1, 6, sects. 6, 9, and 11); concerning the age requisite for municipal office, from twenty-five to fifty-five years (*Digest*, l. 2, 11); in regard to peculating magistrates (*Digest*, iii. 5, 38); on the extent of the responsibility of the magistrates' surety (*Code*, vi. 34, 1, etc.).

³ *Code*, iv. 62, 1; Ulpian, in the *Digest*, i. 16, 7; *ibid.* i. 12, sect. 14, and Marcian, *ibid.* xlvii. 22, 1.

⁴ *Nec quicquam est in provincia quod non per ipsum expediatur* (*Digest*, i. 16, 9, 1).

rected many abuses," say Spartianus and Aurelius Victor;¹ "he was terrible to the wicked," says Zosimus; according to Herodian, he re-established order in the provinces; and all agree that he was unsparing towards governors who were found guilty,² "since he knew that the great robbers produce the less."³ An Egyptian prefect, accused of counterfeiting, suffered the penalties prescribed by the old Cornelian law *de falsis*. But Severus avoided having frequent occasion to punish, by taking great care to choose wisely, — which is for a sovereign the art *par excellence*, — and then by loading with honors those who fulfilled their duties worthily.⁴

Herodian and, following him, modern authors, reproach Severus with a relaxation of discipline, — a strange charge against a man like this. It arises from a remark brought back by Dion⁵ from Britain, but very possibly fabricated at Rome. On his death-bed the Emperor is reported as saying to his sons: "Enrich your soldiers, and you can defy everything." It was brutally said, and the very brutality of the phrase has made it famous. But who overheard this dangerous secret whispered by a dying man? Still, the words, like many other pretended historic sayings, have a certain truth, if they are reduced to the simple terms of what may well have been the Emperor's conviction: "Keep the army content, that it may be devoted to you," — that is to say, pay your soldiers well, and honor them, for they are the one power in the state. What he thus advised, he had himself done, giving to the generals immense estates; to the praetorian tribunes exemption from acting as guardians, even in the case of their comrades' children; to the veterans freedom from personal obligations towards their city;⁶ to the legionaries larger pay, a ration of better corn, more frequent largesses, and the right of wearing the gold ring, — a mark of honor which thereafter

¹ *Implacabilis delictis* (Spart., *Sev.* 18). . . . *Ne parva latrocinia quidem impunita patiebatur* (Aur. Vict., *De Caes.* 20).

² *Accusatos a provincialibus iudices, probatis, rebus, graviter punivit* (Spart., *Sev.* 8).

³ Aur. Vict. *De Caes.* 20.

⁴ *Digest*, xlviii. 10, 1, sec. 4. *Ad erigendos industrios quosque iudicii singularis* (Spart., *ibid.* 18). . . . *Homo in legendis magistratibus diligens* (Capit., *Alb.* 3). *Strenuum quemque praemiis extollebat* (Aur. Vict., *De Caes.* 20).

⁵ Herod., iii. 25; Dion, lxxvi. 15: τὰδε λέγεται τοῖς παῖσιν εἰπεῖν. Later Alexander Severus said: *Miles non timet, nisi vestitus, armatus, calceatus et satur et habens aliquid in zonula* (Lamp., *Alex.* 52).

⁶ *Digest*, xxvii. 1, 9. *A muneribus quae non patrimoniis indicuntur veterani . . . perpetuo excusantur* (*Digest*, l. v. 7). In respect to the *munera*, see above, p. 67, note 1.

made part of the uniform. The depreciation of the precious metals and the need of attracting the Roman population into the army made these measures necessary. Modern nations act in the same manner in respect to pay and rations and the military medal, without any idea of corrupting the troops thereby. And these expenses did not exhaust the treasury, for the finances of the Empire were never in a more flourishing condition.¹ Herodian says further that he authorized the legionaries "to dwell with their wives."² This was a measure of morality. Since the establishment of permanent armies it had been the rule that the soldier should not marry. "The law does not permit it," says Dion; "to certain veterans the Emperor gives the right to contract legitimate marriages," adds Gaius,³ designating the soldiers who obtained the honorable discharge. In the beginning of the third century Tertullian refers to this principle.⁴ But the worst results followed; profligate women followed the armies, and in the villages which by degrees gathered about the encampments were countless families which the law did not recognize.⁵ The Emperor, who had increased the severity of the penalties against adultery, was extremely dis-

¹ We have the proof of this in the immense resources which were allowed to remain in money (Herod., iii. 49, and Spart., *Sev.* 12: *Filiis suis . . . tantum reliquit quantum nullus imperatorum*), and in supplies of all sorts. Severus established the rule, or perhaps renewed it, following Trajan (Lamp., *Elag.* 26), that there should always be seven years' supply of corn in Rome; this was better than the old French *greniers d'abondance*, but from the economic point of view it was a very bad measure.

² γυναιξί τε συνοικεῖν (iii. 8). Marriage is permitted in the English army, but with restrictions which greatly reduce the disadvantages of this custom. Those designated as "non-commissioned officers holding the rank of first or second-class staff-sergeant," etc., may marry. Among the non-commissioned officers three out of four or five, four out of six or seven, six out of ten, according to the grade, and among the soldiers 4 per cent (formerly 7), can obtain this permission. These married couples have a right to a furnished room in barracks, the wife and children receive half and quarter rations, or, when the family does not accompany its head into the colonies, an indemnity of sixpence a day for the wife, and twopenney for each child (Circular of the War Office, April 1, 1871). These expenses of pay and lodging are possible in the case of a small army like the English; but they would have imposed tremendous burdens upon the Roman government, especially since the authorization granted by Severus did not contain these unjust restrictions which, in the English army, make marriage a premium granted only to one soldier out of twenty-five.

³ Tac., *Ann.* xiv. 22; Dion, lx. 24; *Inst.* i. 57. The veterans of the legions had no need of this authorization, being all citizens; but it was necessary for the veterans of the auxiliary troops, who were not so.

⁴ *Exhort. ad Cast.* 12.

⁵ When the soldiers in the camp of Emesa rose in insurrection against Maerinus they called in their wives and children from the adjacent towns to shelter them behind the fortifications of the camp. Many of these families had been legitimated by Severus.

pleased at this immorality. He legalized the custom, granting the legionaries permission to contract legitimate unions.¹ Domitian had already granted to the veterans, without discharging them, the *jus connubii*. The soldiers took advantage of this new right to establish their families near the camps and to live with them; from this resulted disadvantages which a firm hand and some simple regulations of the service would have prevented. Severus possessed the necessary firmness; but his successors did not, and the discipline of the army was impaired.

The religious observance of the military oath, to which the armies of Trajan and Hadrian were still faithful, had been much weakened at the accession of Severus. We have seen under Commodus the insurrection of the legions of Britain; upon his death, of the praetorians; and later, of all the armies. Severus himself in the beginning had to subdue in his own camp two seditions; in Rome, a third;² and a fourth, in the province of Arabia. He restored discipline by setting an example of military virtues: at Lyons he fought as a common soldier; in Mesopotamia, when the army suffered from thirst, and would not drink the foul water of a marsh, in sight of all men he drank a great cupful of it.³ Furthermore, he would not allow a fault-finding spirit to make its way among the troops: a tribune of the praetorian cohorts expiated by death some cowardly words.⁴ Finally, he banished disorder and indolence from the camps. More than one governor, it is probable, received from him a letter similar to this which he one day sent to a legate in Gaul: "Is it not a disgrace that we cannot imitate the discipline of those whom we have conquered? Your soldiers roam about the country, and your tribunes are at the bath in the middle of the day. . . . They eat in taverns, and sleep in houses of debauchery. They spend their time in revelling and drinking and singing; their whole occupation is gluttony and

¹ The wives of soldiers who had accompanied their husbands, absent on service for the state, were not debarred from prosecuting a claim when they had exceeded the period of delay allowed by the law before bringing an action. (Rescripts of the year 227. *Code*, ii. 52, 1, 2.) At this date the legal condition of the soldier's wife was therefore well established, and the rescript of Severus was in full force.

² Spart., *Sev.* 7 and 8. On the day after his entry into Rome, at the Red Rocks, and at Atræ.

³ Dion, lxxv. 2.

⁴ See p. 508. He sent back into exile the deserter who after five years ventured to return (*Digest*, xlix. 16, 13, sect. 6).

drunkenness. Should we see such things if any regard for the ancient discipline prevailed? Let the tribunes be first corrected, and then the soldiers. So long as you fear them, they will not fear you. Niger must have taught you this: to have the soldier obedient, the officers must be worthy of respect.”¹

These last words do honor to the man who spoke thus of Niger after having conquered him; but, in the presence of this letter, what becomes of the charge that Séverus neglected the discipline of the army? A cowardly or indolent ruler may let the reins hang loosely; but never did a general whom five years of war had placed in possession of the supreme power feel that disorder in the camps was an advantage for him, and Severus, who so energetically maintained civil discipline, must have been least likely of all men to feel this. An ancient writer² expressly bears him witness that he established excellent order in the armies; and Dion proves this when he shows the troops in insurrection against Macrinus because the latter sought to enforce anew the military regulations of the first African Emperor.

Severus increased the army by three legions, to which he gave the name Parthicae. The First and Third of these guarded the new province of Mesopotamia; the Second — composed, no doubt, of soldiers on whose fidelity the Emperor could specially rely — was, contrary to usage, brought back to Italy and quartered near Albano,³ to keep perpetually before the Romans the memory of the Eastern victories, and also to be a trustworthy reserve in case of a popular riot or some praetorian sedition. Severus could certainly rely upon his new guard; but he was too prudent to forget the part this corps had played in the recent catastrophes, which brought back earlier ones to his recollection. The Second Parthica was a precaution against the possibility of a surprise. Herodian says, however, that he quadrupled the number of the praetorians; this is not at all probable, and could not have been done without seriously disturbing the whole military organization of the Empire. Dion and Spartianus say nothing of it, and we shall follow their example.⁴

Was it the Emperor who employed Menander, a member of

¹ Spart., *Nig.* 3.

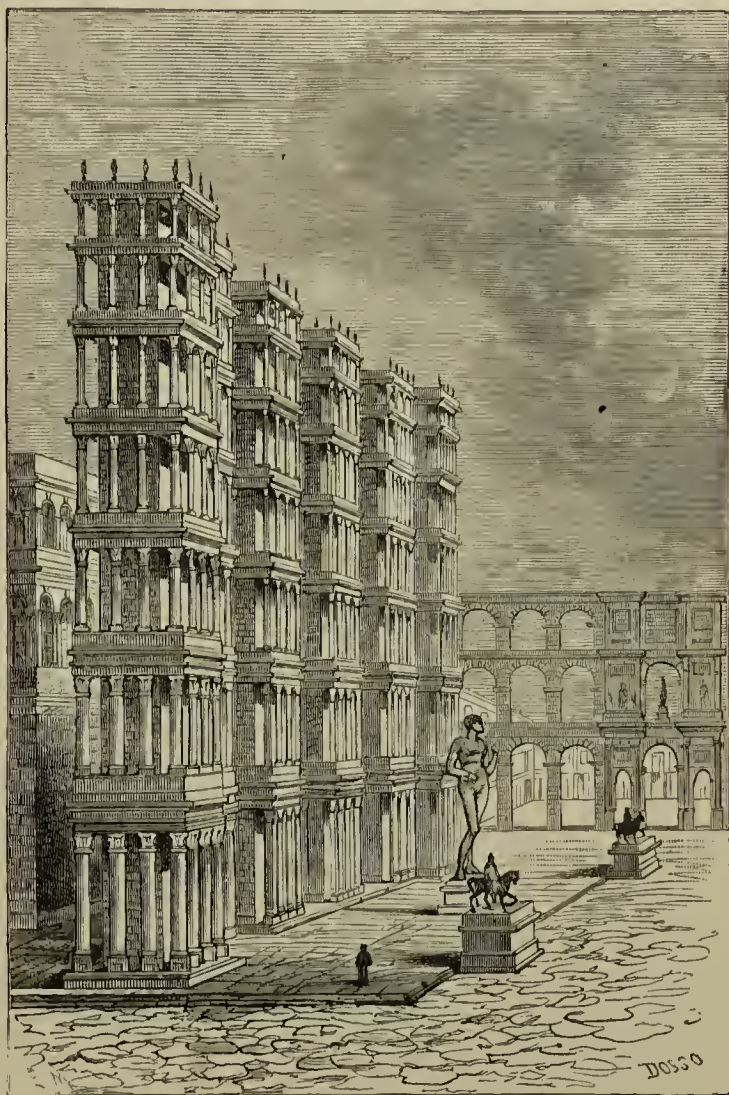
² Zosimus, i. 8: . . . διαθεῖς ἐπιμελῶς τὰ στρατόπεδα.

³ Dion, lv. 24; Hénzen, *Annales de l'Inst. archéol.* 1867, pp. 73–88.

⁴ The author has discussed this question in the *Revue archéol.* of 1877, pp. 299 *et seq.*

his council, in writing four books *de Re militari*;¹ that is to say, preparing a sort of military code? We can at least believe that he encouraged this enterprise, and we know that later it was common to speak of “the regulations of Severus in regard to the army.”²

In the number of his military measures we may count the division of certain of the provinces which were too large. Serious wars had lately sprung up in Syria and in Britain: he divided each of these countries into two commands; he did the same in Africa, where Numidia, comprised since 25 B.C. in the proconsular province of Africa, formed finally a province by itself.⁴



THE SEPTIZONIUM.³

At Rome the Emperor kept the people content and peaceable by largesses, amounting in his reign to the sum of two hundred and twenty million denarii, and by the regularity of the distributions. In his time the state granaries had always corn enough

¹ This work of Arrius Menander seems to have been more important than those of Paternus, prepared in the time of Commodus, and of Macer under Caracalla; for it is from Menander that the *Pandects* most largely borrow. Cf. *Digest*, xlix. 11.

² Dion, lxxviii. 28.

³ Restoration by Canina.

⁴ See the Memoir of L. Renier upon the inscription of Velleius Patereulus in the *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. d'inscr.* for 1876, p. 431, and Marquardt, *Handb.* iv. 310.

for seven years, and oil for five. He built a great temple to Bacchus and Hercules; hot baths, of which nothing now remains; and the Septizonium, — a portico with seven stories of columns, which would have given to the palace of the Caesars a vestibule, perhaps



RUINS OF THE SEPTIZONIUM.¹

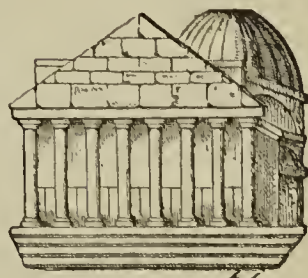
suffered injury, among others the Pantheon of Agrippa² and the theatre of Ostia. Dion is of opinion that the Emperor expended

magnificent, certainly singular, upon the Appian Way, if the augurs had not declared that the gods forbade changing the entrance to the Palatium. For himself he built upon the slopes of the Janiculum, where now stand the Palazzo Corsini and the Farnesina, a villa whose gardens descended to the Tiber and reached to the top of the hill. A gate opened near this spot, in the wall of Aurelian, still bears this Emperor's name, — the *porta Settimiana*. Severus also repaired all the public buildings which had

¹ Canina, *Storia et topogr. di Roma ant.* vol. v., *Gli edif. di Roma*, pl. 267. As late as the sixteenth century some ruins of this portico were in existence, which were seen by Dupérac and designed in his work. *Delle Antichità di Roma*, pl. 13. Cf. *L'Antichità di Roma*, by V. Seamozzi, 1583, pl. 23 and 24. Some of the columns of the Septizonium were employed by Sixtus V. in the Vatican. Cf. Montfaucon, *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, v. 122. He believes that the structures forming the immense ruins of Rabbath-Ammon on the sterile plateau of Moab, and those of Er-Rabbah, are of the same date.

² *Pantheon vetustate corruptum cum omni cultu restituerit* (C. I. L. vi. 896).

too much money in these works; but public constructions are a necessary, and at times an honorable, expense, and the economy that Severus insisted upon in the palace permitted him to spend large sums for useful purposes. There still exist some interesting remains of the little arch which the money-changers and merchants of the *Forum boarium* erected, and many fragments have been found of a plan of Rome which appears to have been engraved on tablets of marble in this reign; the whole size of the plan must have been over three hundred square metres.²

AGRIPPA'S PANTHEON.¹

The provinces felt the benefits of this liberality. We have seen what was done at Byzantium, Antioch, Alexandria, and throughout Egypt.



Front.



Back

ALTAR FOUND AT OSTIA.³

In Syria the Emperor built at Baalbec (Heliopolis) the temple of Jupiter, at the right of the hillock on which, upon the site of an enormous sanctuary built there by the Phoenicians at a remote period. Antoninus had erected a temple to the Sun. The ornamenta-

¹ Souvenir of the Restoration of Agrippa's Pantheon in the year 202. From an engraved stone (amethyst) found at Constantine. (*Gazette archéol.* of 1880, p. 92.)

² Jordan, *Forma Urbis*, with illustrations. See later the Arch of the *Forum boarium*.

³ Altar found in 1880 on the site of the theatre of Ostia, rebuilt by Septimius Severus (*Notizie degli scavi di Antichità*, May, 1880, and April, 1881).

tion of this work marks with its lavish profusion, as does the Septimian Arch at Rome, the decline of decorative art. The architects of that time had no longer the calm serenity of the early masters. Their imagination had run wild, and they tormented their materials as the philosophers of the time tormented theirs. This period, which strove to make everything colossal, had lost the power of building with simplicity because it had lost the feeling of true greatness. But seen from a distance, what a magnificent whole is formed by these vast edifices of Heliopolis, whose mere ruins oppose to the threatening grandeur of the desert an image of the prodigious activity of the men who once filled these solitudes with motion and noise and wealth!

“Many other cities,” his biographer adds, “owe to him remarkable public edifices.”¹ Carthage, Utica, and Leptis Magna received from him the *jus Italicum*, or exemption from the land-tax.² The last-named of these cities was his native place: he probably did not fail to embellish it; but no trace is left of any such works, nor of his paternal house, carefully preserved by the city, and in the sixth century rebuilt by Justinian.⁴ Severus had provided against the most urgent need, in compelling, by military executions, the nomadic tribes who desolated these regions to respect its frontier. In gratitude for the security thus restored to it, the province made an engagement, which it kept up to the time of Constantine, to furnish to Rome every year a fixed quantity of corn and oil. “To the Africans,” says his biographer, “Severus was a god.” The arch of triumph of Thevesta (Tebessa), finished under Caracalla in 214, had been begun in honor of his father.⁵

LARGE BRONZE.³

Severus adopted for the provinces some of the regulations proposed by Niger to Marcus Aurelius, and made certain others him-

¹ Spart., *Sev.* 23. Zosimus says also: “He adorned a great number of cities,” and Eutropius (viii. 8): *Multa toto Romano orbe reparavit.*

² *Digest*, l. 15, 8, sect. 11. We have seen already what he did for the cities of Syria.

³ Reverse of a coin of Septimius Severus struck at Carthage. Cybele seated on a lion. The coin here given bears the legend: *Indulgentia Augg. in Carth.* But we know not in memory of what favor granted to this city the coin was struck (Eckhel, vii. 183).

⁴ Procop., *De Aedib. Justin.* vi. 4.

⁵ Inscriptions, whose number increases yearly, proves the active impulse given by Severus to public works in Roman Africa. See Renier’s *Inscr. d’Alg.*, and many numbers of the *Bull. de corr. afr.*

self which showed his care to prevent even the smallest abuses: he prohibited any man, taking a wife in a province where he held office, from receiving anything from her by will;¹ he forbade the soldier to buy property in the district where he was in service,



RUINS OF THE ARCH OF THE VESTA.

and the governor to allow military or civil quarterings to become a burden to the provincials.² Lastly, he completed for the benefit of the cities the reorganization of the imperial post which Hadrian had begun.³ Ulpian has preserved for us one of the rescripts

¹ *Digest*, xxxiv. 9, 2, sect. 1.

² *Digest*, xlix. 16, 9; *ibid.* xxxiv. 9, 2, sect. 1; xlix. 16, 9, and 1, 16, 4 pr.: . . . *Ne in hospitiiis praebeendis onerit provinciam.*

³ *Spart., Sev.* 4. The extent of the reform made by Severus is not known. Augustus had organized this service, *vehiculatio*, and imposed on the landowners heavy burdens, from which Nerva exempted Italy. Trajan developed this institution and corrected the abuses which had been caused by too easy concession of rights of travelling. The assistance furnished by the cities remained, however, considerable, although it appears that magistrates using the *cursus publicus* had to pay something, since Hadrian released them from this: *Ne magistratus hoc onere gravarentur* (*Spart., Hadr.* 7). Antoninus introduced some relief, and Severus granted at

in which the legislator did not disdain to be epigrammatic. The Roman world was very fond of presents; many and forced ones had been made to the governors under the Republic, and some were still offered to those of the Empire. Consulted by a governor on this subject, Severus replied to him: "An old Greek proverb says, 'Neither everything, nor always, nor from all;'" and the Emperor added: "Always to refuse would be uncivil; invariably to accept is contemptible; to take everything would be the extreme of avarice."¹ One thing, however, was worth more than the best rescripts, — good governors; and the old authors all acknowledge that he took care to make excellent selections. One of them, the prefect of Egypt, having been guilty of an offence, was sent into exile.²

The soldiers meanwhile continued, wherever there was need, to be employed in peaceful labor; but, while using the pick and the trowel, still keeping the sword close at hand.³ Accordingly, tranquillity was never once seriously interrupted at the foot of the Atlas, nor on the banks of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Tigris. In the presence of this vigilant ruler, whose hand was so heavy, the Barbarians remained timid and quiet. During this reign we find soldiers posted throughout all the provinces to hunt down the bandits of the neighborhood.⁴ Was this an original measure of this Emperor, whom his biographer calls "the enemy of robbers in all places?"⁵ The long impunity of brigands in Spain and Gaul and Syria, and even in Italy itself, in the time of Commodus and during the period of the civil wars,⁶ proves that, even if such a measure had been adopted before the time of Severus, it had fallen into neglect, and needed to be again enforced. This ruler, implacable in respect to disorder, must surely have desired that security

the expense of the imperial treasury a reduction by which those profited who had the duty of collecting these taxes: *Vehicularium munus a privatis ad fiscum traduxit* (Spart., *Sev.* 14). But after his time the whole expense fell upon the municipalities.

¹ *Digest*, i. 16, 6, sect. 3: *Quam rem (seniorum) D. Sev. et imp. Ant. Elegantissime epistula sunt moderati*, etc.

² *Digest*, xlviii. 10, 1, sect. 4.

³ Cf. Or.-Henzen, 905 in Syria; 937 in Rhætia; 3,586 in Lower Germany; 4,987 in Pannonia, near Buda; 6,701 in Britain; in Africa, the *via Septimiana* constructed by the Third Augustan legion (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 4,361, etc.).

⁴ Tertull., *Apol.*, *Latronibus vestigandis per universas provincias militaris statio sortitur.*

⁵ . . . *Latronum ubique hostis* (Spart., *Sev.* 18).

⁶ *Digest*, i. 12, 1, sect. 4; xlviii. 19, 8; xxii. 6, sect. 1.

should be as well guarded in the interior as on the frontiers. In view of rendering the repression more prompt and energetic, he decided that the prefect of the city should have cognizance of all crimes committed in Italy, with power to sentence to the mines or to deportation.

III. — SEVERUS IN BRITAIN; HIS DEATH (208–211 A.D.).

To keep his sons at a distance from the dangers of Rome, Severus himself resided there but seldom. He made long sojourns in his Sabine and Campanian villas; but his endeavors to subdue these fiery natures were fruitless. Geta, as well as Antoninus, rushed madly into pleasure. Both fled the learned society with which their mother surrounded herself, and their father's grave friends, to seek the company of gladiators and charioteers of the circus. Even in their sports they hated each other with bitter rivalry. One day, on the race-course, they disputed so hotly for victory that Antoninus was flung from his chariot and had his thigh broken in the fall. Severus resumed the cuirass, and took them away with him into Britain (208).¹

There could not have been, at that extremity of the Empire, perils so serious that, to abate them, the old Emperor—gouty and infirm—should be obliged to undertake so long a journey and to remain absent for so considerable a time. The legions of Britain had long been able to restrain these mountaineers, poor, and necessarily few in number, in their sterile districts. But he doubtless felt it necessary to withdraw his sons from the influence of dangerous companions, as well as to keep his legions employed. This man, whose own fortune had begun in the camps, now, late in life, returned thither, hoping to make the fortune of his sons secure. Julia Domna and Papinian accompanied him. There was not a single battle fought, for Fingal and Ossian, the legendary heroes, did not come forth against the Roman Emperor from their rustic palace of Selma; nevertheless he lost many troops in surprises, the chief form of warfare of these savages. But their densely

¹ Coins of the year 208 bear the legend: PROF. AVGG.

wooded hills, over which an army could advance only by cutting its way by the axe, and their marshes, whose yielding soil required a whole forest to be thrown into it, did not prevent the heavily



GETA IN A TOGA, WEARING THE BULLA.¹

armed legions from reaching the extremity of the island, where these men of the South beheld with amazement days that were almost without intervening night.

Severus remained three years in this country, where the enervating luxury of Italy was a thing unknown. After the victory over Albinus he had divided it into two provinces, that the action of the imperial government might be more effectual there, and the influence of the governors less to be dreaded. Geta—now made Augustus and invested with the tribunitian power—administered the southern province; Antoninus led the army in the North and negotiated with the Caledonians; while the Emperor, established in the city of York, superintended his soldiers' restoration of Hadrian's wall.²

In 210 the submission of the Barbarians seeming to be secured by a treaty which obliged them to yield a part of their territory, Severus added to the titles commemorating his Oriental victories that of Britannicus, which Antoninus also took. In memory of this last triumph of the African conqueror, the Senate caused a medal to be struck representing two Caledonians bound to the trunk of a palm-tree.

¹ Marble statue in the Grey collection (Clarac, *Musée*, pl. 966, No. 2,486A).

² *C. J. L.* vol. vii. No. 912c, and pp. 99 *et seq.* See Vol. V. p. 338, note 3. Spartianus is the first author who speaks of a wall constructed by Severus to the north of Hadrian's wall,—an opinion now abandoned.

While Severus designedly lingered at this extremity of the Empire, the idlers around Lake Curtius¹ imagined news at will. Sometimes the story ran that a Barbarian woman—extremely well informed, it appears, in respect to Roman life—had given a lesson to Julia Domna, contrasting with the depravity of the Roman ladies the far too virile manners of the women of Caledonia. Now it was a little drama, in which the Emperor was the actor, and the soldiers the audience. His eldest son had sought to gain over the troops; the sedition being quelled, the Emperor had caused himself to be borne to his tribunal, and had said to the mutinous soldiers, who now implored his clemency: “Do you see at last that the head commands, and not the feet?”² He was represented as uttering specious platitudes, suited to a monk, but quite out of place in the mouth of a ruler who had not begun to take account of the compensations of the other world: “I have been everything, and nothing is of value;” or these words, perhaps more truthful, addressed to the urn which was to contain his ashes: “Thou shalt hold that which the world itself has not been able to hold.” Some related that to make an end of cruel suffering he had asked for poison, which was refused him; others, that his eldest son had

GOLD COIN.³BRONZE COIN.⁴

endeavored to persuade the physicians by that means to take the old man's life. But a secret poisoning does not afford proper tragic effect. More expert story-tellers showed Caracalla riding up one day behind his father with drawn sword ready to kill him. Severus, warned by the cries of horror of his escort, looks around; he sees the naked weapon, and the would-be parricide dares not complete his crime. Then we have contradictory

¹ A little grove which was a rendezvous of the *ardeliones* (Phaedrus, II. v. 1), the “reporters” of the time, . . . *garruli* . . . *supra Lacum* (Plautus, *Curcul.* IV. i. 16).

² The epigram became famous; we meet it again sixty-four years later in an official document, the proclamation of the Emperor Tacitus: *Acclamationes Senatus*: . . . *Severus dixit, caput imperare, non pedes.*

³ Coin of Septimius Severus, representing the bridge over the Tyne. P. M. TR. P. XVI. COS. III. PP. Bridge ended on each side by a tower with four columns; under the bridge, a vessel.

⁴ Coin commemorative of the victories of Severus in Britain. VICT. BRIT. P. M. TR. P. XIX. COS. III. PP. SC. Two Victories placing a buckler on a palm-tree, under which are seated two captives (Cohen, No. 644).

scenes, such as the declaimers of the time delighted in. In one, Severus, in his tent, deliberates with his prefects whether the guilty son shall be put to death; in another, he calls for Caracalla, gives him a dagger, and says: "Strike, or bid Papinian strike; he will obey you, for you are his Emperor."

All this is very dramatic, and highly improbable. Caracalla doubtless showed an impatience to reign which obliged the Emperor to remind him that the true master was "the white-bearded king,"¹ and he was quite capable of conceiving the designs attributed to him. But if he harbored them, why did he not execute them? Nothing could have been easier for the man who in Rome itself murdered another Emperor, his brother, in their mother's

arms. At sixty-six years of age, Severus, long the victim of a distressing disease, was at his life's end, and Caracalla had no need to hasten the work of destruction which Nature was accomplishing. But the great idle city welcomed whatever could amuse it; and the imagination easily created in those remote regions tragic adventures which, after the murder of Geta, appeared to all men to be realities.

To these doubtful legends we shall prefer the truly imperial words of the old Emperor: "It is to me a great satisfaction to leave in profound peace the Empire, which I found a prey to dissensions of every kind;" and

the characteristic order given in his dying moments: "Go, see if there is anything to be done." Chateaubriand says in his *Études historiques*: "The officer of the guard coming in to obtain the



JULIA DOMNA.²

¹ . . . *Incanaque menta*
Regis Romani . . . VERGIL, *Aeneid*, vi. 810.

² Cameo in agate onyx (two layers), pendant of a necklace found in 1809 at Naix (Meuse), the ancient Nasium, capital of the Leuci.

countersign for the day, the Emperor gave him this: ‘Let us work;’ and with that fell into eternal rest” (Feb. 4, 211 A. D.). This adieu to life of the valiant soldier, his last counsel to those about him, has become the motto of humanity: *Laboremus*.

Severus had written the history of his life, and doubtless, after the example of Augustus, ordered that a summary of it should be engraved on marble. At least, in the time of Spartianus such a summary was to be read upon the portico built by Caracalla.

No one of his successors down to the time of Diocletian—a period of nearly eighty years—died a natural death. That Severus did so, was due to great wisdom on his part, and it was also a great good fortune to the state; for this reign of eighteen years, thus ending peacefully, proves how thoroughly he had introduced order everywhere.

He was lacking in gentleness,—a quality charming in the individual, but often tending to weakness in the ruler. When Julian presents the Caesars in the assembly of the gods, Silenus cries out at sight of Severus: “Of that man I shall say nothing; I am afraid of his savage and inexorable temper.” Severe on principle, he struck heavy blows, so that he might not have to strike often;¹ and in his autobiography—which the old writers believed authentic²—he justified his severities. But these heavy blows have resounded so far that posterity still hears them, and Severus remains the man of his name.³ Contemporaries judged differently,⁴ and he was greatly lamented. Let us read his history, remembering that the principal duty of an emperor of that century was to secure order to a hundred million men, and we shall say of him more truly even than it was said of Louis XI. of France: “All things considered, he was a king.”

SILVER COIN.⁵

¹ . . . *Quo deinceps mitius* (Aur. Vict., *De Caes.* 20).

² . . . *Abs se texta, ornatu et fide paribus composuit* (Aur. Vict., *De Caes.* 20).

³ *Imperator vere nominis sui, vere Pertinax, vere Severus* (Spart., *Sev.* 14).

⁴ *Judicium de eo post mortem magnum omnium fuit . . . ac multum post mortem amatus* (*ibid.* 19) . . . *Ab Afris ut deus habetur* (*ibid.* 13).

⁵ Septimius Severus on horseback, holding a lance. Silver coin, with the legend: PRO-FECTIO AVG. (Cohen, No. 343.)

CHAPTER XC.

THE CHURCH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD CENTURY.

I. — GENERAL CONDITION OF MINDS; TENDENCY TO MYSTICISM; THE ALEXANDRIANS.

THE third century is the heroic age of the Christian society which we have seen forming in obscurity, and gaining growth in silence. At this period the Church possesses all her means of action, and the mortal struggle begins between her and the Empire. The moment has come then to measure the forces of the two combatants. We are acquainted with those of her antagonist; let us look at her own.

In an earlier chapter¹ we have shown that at different epochs the human mind takes different directions, and that there are formed, as it were, great currents of ideas, in which flows the best of the national life.² Jurisconsults and administrative officers, architects and generals, artists and moral philosophers, had been the strength and glory of Rome in the second century. In the third, the law has still eminent interpreters, but the last representative of the ancient science, Galen, has just died, and has left no successor. Art and letters, properly so called, disappear. For twelve centuries³ humanity will not hear again that hymn of beauty which Greece had sung so long, and whose echoes were

¹ Vol. VI. p. 331, the beginning of the chapter entitled "Ideas."

² Hegel has said in his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 9: *Jede Zeit hat so eigenthümliche Umstände, ist ein so individueller Zustand, dass in ihm aus ihm selbst entschieden werden muss, und allein entschieden werden kann.* It is a law of history; and to be thoroughly acquainted with the special character, or what may be termed the dominant tone, of an epoch, is the first requisite of historical criticism. The influence of the environment is so great upon the intellectual life that there can be no just judgment of men and things except by replacing them in their environment.

³ On the literary poverty of the third century, see Tenffel, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, pp. 835–875. Of science there is no longer any question; as to the arts, see below, chap. xev. sect. 5.

still heard in the Rome of Lucretius, Horace, and Vergil. The new spirit proscribes those earthly splendors, *la bellezza del mondo*,¹ which man is nevertheless called to delight in. "Why did they fall?" cried the Christian writers sadly, referring to certain heretics. "Aristotle and Theophrastus are the objects of their admiration; Euclid is continually in their hands. They neglect the science of the Church for the study of geometry, and, absorbed in measuring the earth, they lose sight of heaven."² Another, scoffing at Ptolemy,—the man who was esteemed the wisest of his century,—writes with reference to the exact sciences: "O frivolous labor, which serves only to inflate the soul with pride!"³ The highest eulogium at that time was to be "diligent in divine things."⁴

This is the language heard among philosophers as well as among Christians. While the author of the letter to Diognetus condemned all learning which had not for its object the invisible world, Plotinus wrote: "Why does not man arrive at the truth? Because the soul is continually drawn away from the perception of divine things by external impressions." And it was his desire that, deaf to all worldly sounds, she should hearken only to the voice from on high.⁵ Then occurred this phenomenon, unusual in the Western world: men become oblivious of the earth,—so long the object of their love,—and lift their heads towards those ærial palaces which, in different ages, logic and feeling build in the clouds, with such magnificence or such religious terror, and of which the imagination is the sole sovereign.

The sons of old Italy—a sluggish race—would not have had these aspirations after the unknown, which are the glory of the human soul; but Italy, in her turn, experienced an invasion more terrible than that of Hannibal and of the Gauls:

"All Egypt's monsters now in Rome their temple find."

The men and the beliefs of Asia had taken possession of the land where formerly simplicity of ideas and of morals prevailed. The mind of the Orient dominated that of Rome, and the ardent soul of those visionaries from the banks of the Orontes and of the

¹ The expression is Da Vinci's.

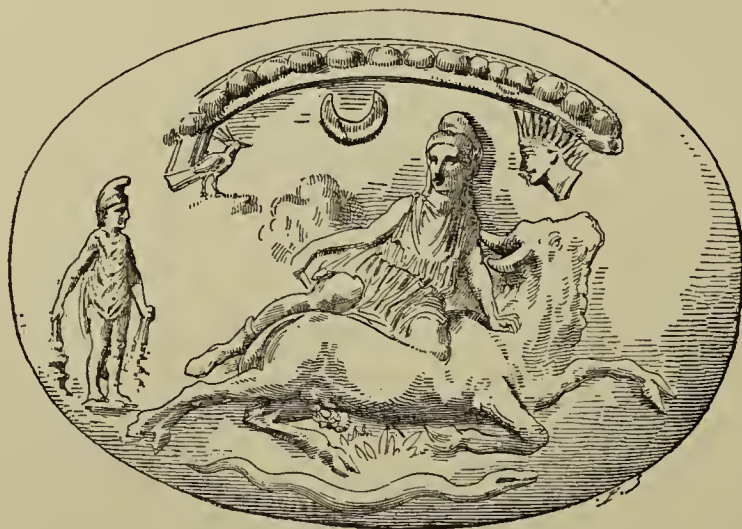
² Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* v. 28.

³ *Philosoph.* iv. 12.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* v. 10.

⁵ ἀκούειν φθόγγων τῶν ἄνω (*Enneads*, v. 12).

Nile, lacking the ballast of science, wandered at random through the thousand systems of abstract thought and philosophy. New gods were desired, and crowds flocked to the strange worship of the Syrian goddess and of Sabazius, or to the monotheistic religions of Mithra and Serapis,—the latter having a remarkably pure moral doctrine,¹ and the former presenting in its dogmas and its ceremonies more than one instance of agreement with Christianity.²



MITHRA SACRIFICING THE BULL IN THE GROTTO.³

In this way, and along every channel, the current of the century conducted human thought towards religious questions: seductive but insoluble problems, of which some, however, must be held as demonstrated, even when a demonstration of them is impossible. As formerly in Athens men philosophized at every street-corner, now in each petty village of the Empire they dogmatize. It is the fashion to appear devout, to be called the priest of some divinity; and the municipal curiae are full of religious functionaries hitherto unknown there.⁴ In the century of Pericles.

¹ See above, pp. 528.*et seq.*

² Mithra was a *mediator* between the supreme deity and man, a representative of the love of the creator for the creature. He was also a *redeemer*, who purified souls and remitted sins. Hence Tertullian (*De Corona*, 15) attributed to a device of the Evil One those relations which he could not help recognizing between this ancient Assyrian religion and the new religion of Christ. See p. 431, note 1.

³ *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,031. Intaglio on chalcidony, 16 mill. by 20. Behind the bull is a priest, wearing, like the god, a Phrygian cap (tiara), and holding two inverted torches. Above the principal group are the sun, the moon, and the prophetic raven. Cf. the bas-relief from the Louvre, Vol. IV. p. 185, and the group from the Vatican, p. 395 of this volume.

⁴ This is seen even in the inscriptions. Among the 164 decurions of Canusium in 223, not a priest is found; while of the seventy-one names of the Album of Thamugas, in the following

on the day when the ephebi received their arms from the state, they took this oath: "I swear never to dishonor these sacred arms, to fight for my gods and my hearth, either alone or with all, and to leave behind me my country not impaired, but strengthened." This heroic oath the ephebi had kept at Salamis and Marathon, when they there preserved their own liberty and the civilization of the world. In the third century of our era they still took this oath, but as one repeats a prayer in an unknown tongue. The Athenian ephebeia was now merely a religious college; and this transformation had certainly been effected in the numerous cities which had possessed the ephebic institution.¹ The pythoness of Delphi and the prophetic oaks of Dodona, mute in Strabo's time, had

SERAPIS.²

century (from 364 to 367), we count two *sacerdotes*, thirty-six flamens for life, four pontiffs, four augurs, — that is, two thirds of the members who are or have been invested with religious functions. Whatever hypothesis may be adopted to explain the presence of so many priests in the curia of Thamugas (see *Ephem. epigr.* iii. 82), the fact will still remain that the greater part of the members of this municipal council had a sacerdotal character, or were indebted to the priestly office which they had filled for the honor of being inscribed upon the *Album* after the *duumviri* in charge, but before the other magistrates. M. Dumont has established the same fact in reference to Athens (*Éphébie attique*, i. 137); it was general. See the *Philopatrias*, — included in the works of Lucian, — the ridiculous characters of which are caricatures of actual persons.

¹ Alb. Dumont, *Éphébie attique*, i. 9, 36, and 39; and Collignon, *De Colleg. epheborum*.

² Bronze statue in the gallery of Florence.

recovered their speech.¹ Alexander even, the personification of war, had assumed a religious character: he is at this time invoked as the beneficent genius who rescues from witchcraft.²

This turn of mind is seen all through Roman society, both high and low. The provincials, who had replaced in the Senate and in public office the sceptical aristocracy of the last century of the



GOLD COIN.⁴

Republic and the early days of the Empire, wished to believe in something. The Syrian rulers had their minds filled with religious visions. In the third century the Emperors added to their titles that of Pious, *Pius*; ³ the Empresses were styled the "most holy" (*sanctissimae*), and at court as well as in town, men were reading the histories of Philostratus and of Aelian, replete with miracles, and the marvellous Lives of Apollonius and Pythagoras transformed into divine incarnations.⁵ They were no longer content with the ebon door whence old Homer, with his half-smile, caused dreams and sleep and death to issue forth; they sought for that dread passage to rend the veil which hangs behind it, and find there something else than the monotonous pleasures promised by the Graeco-Roman polytheism. They claimed "to penetrate the secrets of the inmost life of God," by determining

¹ Strabo, vii. 327, and Pausanias, I. xvii. 6.

² See, in the reign of Caracalla, the species of worship of which Alexander was the object, and in that of Elagabalus "an apparition of this Genius."

³ In the case of Severus and the Emperors of his house, it was a proper name borrowed from Antoninus Pius, or more properly from Commodus, whose adopted brother Severus declared himself to be. Beginning with Macrinus, it is a qualification which all the Emperors of the third century assume. An inscription of Gallienus (Orelli, No. 1,007) says of him: *Cujus invicta virtus sola deitate superata est*. Another (No. 1,014) styles him *sanctissimus*. Julia Maesa (Or.-Henzen, No. 5,515, and Eckhel, vii. 249) and the wives of Gordian III. (Orelli, No. 977), of Philippus (*C. I. L.* vol. iii. No. 3,718), of Gallienus (Orelli, No. 1,010) are *sanctissimae*. Victorina, mother of the usurper Victorinus, is called *piissima* (*ibid.* No. 1,017). I am aware that *sanctus* in classic Latin signifies pure, chaste, inviolate; but I believe that in the third century the idea of sanctity was added. The imperial house, *domus divina* (in an inscription of the year 202, Wilmanns, 985), affirmed its pagan faith the more in proportion as that was attacked by the Christians. The word *sacer* will become synonymous with imperial, and will soon be applied to all the functions of the Emperor. Cities and individuals follow the example; the curiae of Lyons (Boissieu, pp. 24, 80, 160), of Volcei (Mommsen, *Inscr. Neap.* No. 218), etc., are called *ordo sanctissimus*, that of Brixia (*C. I. L.* vol. v. No. 4,192) is *piissimus*. The same qualifying epithets are found in the third century in many inscriptions of unimportant persons; for instance, on the monumental slabs of Carthage.

⁴ Septimius Severus the Pious.

⁵ The *Lives of Pythagoras* by Porphyry and Iamblichus are as marvellous as is that of *Apollonius* by Philostratus. They were not as yet written, but these legends already had a wide circulation.

his nature, his attributes and will. All eminent minds joined in the quest of the divine: some by the way of Christianity, others by the neo-platonic school in which the philosophic effort of the pagan world had resulted. Thus, when the wind passes over them, all the ears of the ripening harvest bow in the same direction.

This condition of minds is susceptible of explanation. After centuries of warfare, which had given over to them the earth and its wealth, Roman society had for the two succeeding centuries feasted on pleasures and become surfeited with luxury. Seneca, Epictetus, and the moralists of the Antonine epoch have pictured to us this society wearied with the long development of its luxury, and now falling into satiety, and disdain of the useful and the real. All the great motives were gone. In this Empire, too vast to be a man's country, the sentiment which had so lifted the hearts of the citizens of former times had now for its aliment only interests of an inferior order; hence there was no patriotism towards the Empire. Nor was there any political life; since men could have no share in public affairs, they became indifferent towards them. The grand stream of poetry which Greece had poured forth to the world had become shallow in traversing the Roman wastes, and now it was drying up; the artists were artisans; the poets, arrangers of words; the Vergil of the time, Oppianus of Syria, sang of the chase.¹ Nothing of that which a century before still constituted the fulness of life, now filled the void of their souls. This people of violent action sat down and dreamed. From the glad heights which the Greek genius and a constant prosperity had made brilliant, men had gone down into the dull and chilly lowland, and they were overpowered by insupportable melancholy.

Besides, around them the world seemed to be growing old.² On all sides the horizon will soon be threatening: without, the Barbarians were becoming formidable; within, continual revolutions, of which Rome will no longer be the sole theatre and victim; everywhere the economic life profoundly disturbed and the state

¹ A writer without taste or originality, who must not be confounded with another writer of the same name, Oppianus of Cilicia, author of the *Haliutica*, or marine fishery, who lived under Marcus Aurelius, and whose work, in 3,506 Greek verses, is one of our best didactic poems. See Bourquin, *La chasse et la pêche dans l'antiquité*, 1878.

² This is an expression of Saint Cyprian to Demetrius, *senuisse jam mundum*.

about to be submerged. Confronted by such misfortunes, which seemed the penalty of its past happiness, this society, so long tranquil and joyous, gave itself up to more serious thoughts: it had the anticipations of death which beset old age. In the time of Septimius Severus, the jurists alone excepted, pagans and Christians produce only philosophers and religious writers or theurgists: for the first, Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyry, with the subtle doctrines discovered by them in that higher world of mind which Plato had laid open; for the second, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Cyprian among the Latins, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen among the Greeks, — six men who, in other times, would have been the honor of profane literature, and who have continued to be the glory of the Church.

The religious sentiment can never be crushed out by science, because it is indestructible; besides, the two do not pertain to the same world, and do not proceed in the same manner in the formation of ideas. But science may inflict incurable wounds on established creeds; the Roman society not possessing creeds, the supernatural had preserved its power, and a religious reaction had swept away the superficial scepticism of the philosophers, as would have been the case with that of our eighteenth century, had it not found an auxiliary in “the satanic sciences.” From Lucretius to Lucian many had doubted; from Athens to Alexandria, from Rome to Jerusalem, all men now believe: here, in the God-man of the Christian faith or in the *hypostases* of the Alexandrians; there, in the ancient deities who retained their place in the sanctuaries, or in the new gods which the East was continually giving to the Romans.

In speaking thus, we of course leave out of account the crowd which follows without thinking, — that which Lucian in his *Jupiter Tragoedus* has called “the vile mob,” — and consider only those who think, and who, even under the tunic of the slave, are leaders, like Epictetus and Blandina. These are the elect souls who influence others and by whom moral revolutions are accomplished; it is they, consequently, whom we must study.

Those who are styled the Alexandrians attempted an impossible compromise between religion and science. Standing between the spirit of ancient Greece and the Oriental spirit, they wished both

to believe and to know; beginning with dialectics, which can furnish only abstractions incomprehensible to the vulgar, they ended with mysticism,—that is to say, in the midst of clouds, whither the multitude could not follow them. With reference to the great question of the divine unity, for instance, they arrived at an abstract and sterile conception,—a Being forever separate from the world. While the God of the Christians is seen, touched, and enters into daily communion with man, their god is without form, attributes, or name; he is the *unnamable*; he is even without intelligence, for intelligence, which supposes a division between the subject comprehending and the object comprehended, would forbid admitting the absolute unity of being in itself. “The gods are impassive,” says Porphyry, “and cannot be turned aside by invocations, expiations, or prayers, . . . since what is impassive can be neither moved nor constrained.” This was the god of Epicurus, devoid of hate, without love and without power,—and, it must also be said, that of Plato in the *Philebus*, and still more that of Aristotle: dwelling apart from the world, of which he knows nothing.

As the Christian has the Trinity, three persons in one God, the Alexandrians have their three hypostases, in which we may see the absolute principle of the Eleatics, the *demiurgos* of Plato, and the god of Aristotle, immovable motor of the world; and of these they essay to form a divine unity.¹ But that which is profound is obscure, and the people pay no regard to it. This Unity which thinks itself without producing, this Intelligence which comprehends the world and does not make it, this Movement which gives life and cannot have cognizance of it,—what is this, in its effect upon the multitudes, when placed by the side of Jehovah whom Moses saw face to face; of the Holy Spirit descending in tongues of fire upon the heads of the apostles and giving the prophetic inspira-

¹ The idea of the Trinity is one of the oldest beliefs of humanity. It is found in Egypt, in Chaldæa; among the Etruscans, the Scandinavians, and the Germans, and strange monuments exhibit it to us in the Gallic triads. This myth consisted in the conception of a god one in essence, without being one in person. “This god,” says Maspero (*Histoire ancienne des peuples de l’Orient*, p. 28), speaking of the Egyptian triad, “is *father*, simply because he *is*, and the power of his nature is such that he *begets eternally* without ever becoming enfeebled or exhausted. . . . He is at once the *father*, the *mother*, the *son*. Begotten of God, born of God, without issuing from God, these three persons are God in God, and so far from dividing the unity of the divine nature, all three contribute to his infinite perfection.”

tion; what is it, above all, when compared with Christ, who treads the rugged pathways of life, enduring all the miseries, all the griefs of humanity, — who at Golgotha ransoms it with his blood, who in the garden of Joseph of Arimathæa rends the stone of his sepulchre to teach men that they, like him, are immortal as well in their flesh as in their spirit?

Thus, to escape the anthropomorphism which had been the ruin of the pagan religions, the Alexandrians had suffered themselves to be led by dialectics to an impersonal God having no relation with the earth. But it had indeed been necessary that from this abode of the absolute, of immobility, and consequently of death, they should again come down to the world of life; and they returned with allegories and symbols to produce a revival of popularity for the old mythology which had lost even the poetry of ruins.

Their moral tone is lofty, their lives were pure, they had restored to a position of honor the Pythagorean abstemiousness, and they had institutes in which the most austere rules of monastic observances were enforced. "When the soul came forth from the hand of God," they said, "it was a fall which must be redeemed by holy acts. The great work of piety consists in conquering the body, the source of all the passions, the gross garment in which the soul is captive. Let it, at least in this prison, lead an angelic life (*βίος ἀγγελικὸς ἐν τῷ σώματι*)." "What matters the body to me?" said another: "it is my soul that I shall take away with me when I die." Saint Paul himself was never more severe, and Origen, who committed a half-suicide, used to say: "Who will deliver me from this wretch?" The spirit of struggle against the flesh is the same with both parties.

And what reward did the Alexandrians promise themselves for these austerities? Annihilation in the Infinite Being. "To die is to live," they said with Plato. But this life of an unconscious particle lost in the great All, was real death; while faith gave to the Christian the certainty of personal immortality. Besides, they possessed neither a creed having the authority of the divine word, nor an organization to preserve and extend it, nor discipline to maintain its authority. They had a philosophy, and sought the higher knowledge of things; they had not a religion, a faith, an

absolute rule of conduct, and a promise of redemption. Now, to move and hold the multitude, the most subtle reasonings are useless; feeling and passion are required. These powerful means of acting upon souls were to be found on that road to Calvary marked with the sweat of blood; they were not found in the tranquil gardens of the Academy. This is why humanity at that time deserted the one road for the other, — in which, nevertheless, for the same reasons, some will long continue to walk.

It was the very year of the accession of Severus that Ammonius Saccas, or the Porter, opened the school of Alexandria which for two centuries disputed with Christianity the spiritual supremacy. When Plotinus had heard him, he exclaimed: "This is the man whom I have been seeking." Plotinus was greatly his superior, and was the real founder of that school, at once rational and mystical, which, combining contrary principles, could never exert the victorious influence of a simple and ardent faith. As eclectics, the Alexandrians accepted everything, on condition of interpreting everything. Priests, philosophers, and poets seemed to them to murmur the same thought in different tongues; and this broad comprehensiveness rendered them at the same time superstitious and sceptical. While they were logicians, they placed above reason the dangerous faculty of the visionary, that ecstasy in which man believes he participates in the divine intelligence and sees that which reason is unable to show. Being idealists, with their God inaccessible and solitary, above the summits of human thought, they became pantheists by their system of emanations, which made of all beings — bodies or spirits — "an effluence of the divine substance," as light is an irradiation from the sun. And to this absolute, incomprehensible, ineffable being, from whom everything proceeds and to whom all returns, they rise by prayer, by love. Faith, according to these strange logicians, is far superior to all human wisdom. It leads to theurgy, and that to supernatural inspiration, to ecstasy, which is the ideal of the pagan devotees, because "in ecstasy," said Plotinus, "man possesses all good and lacks nothing; he feels neither pain nor death." We shall find the same words in the mouth of Tertullian, and the same sentiment in the martyrs. The Alexandrians, then, are in many points akin to the Christians. Saint Augustine has recognized this; but

emerging from the ecstasy and from their subtle reasonings, the former fell back into their cold allegories, the latter into their living reality.

Porphyry, the successor of Plotinus, formulating the Platonic doctrine of daimons,¹ admits souls intermediate between the Trinity and man, *archontes* representing the forces of Nature, angels, divine messengers bearing to heaven our prayers and bringing down gifts of grace, and even baleful genii, who impel us to evil. Later, the



CHRIST AND THE TWELVE APOSTLES.²

school will assume to become a church: Iamblichus and Proclus—who styled himself “the priest of Nature”—will be visionaries or thaumaturgists performing miracles, and a rivalry was destined to spring up between these men who contend for the world. A great work of Porphyry against Christianity was the signal of the war to the death which Diocletian declared against it; but Constantine burned the books of the philosopher,³ and Proclus was obliged to escape by voluntary exile the persecution of the Christian Emperors.

¹ See p. 417.

² Martigny, *Dict. des Antiquités chrétiennes*, p. 54. Bottom of a glass bearing this legend: *Petrus cum suis omnes elares (hilaris) pie seses* (a Greek word taken from the verb ζῶω, to live). This mixture of the two languages was not uncommon.

³ See, in the *Cod. Just.* i. 1, 3, 3, an ordinance of the year 449 which condemns all books contrary to the doctrine of Nicaea and Ephesus to be burned, and decrees the penalty of death against those who preserve or read them. Justinian (*Nov. xlii.* 1, sect. 2) renewed these penalties, and this abominable law lasted fourteen centuries. The triumph of the Mussulman theologians in the thirteenth century also resulted in the persecution of the philosophers. The progress of Arab civilization was checked, and night overspread that East whence, for three centuries, had gleamed a quickening light which brought back life to the West. See G. Dugat, *Hist. des philosophes et des théologiens musulmans*, 1878.

This school, which is called that of Alexandria, was scattered over the entire surface of the Roman world, Plotinus teaching in Rome, Porphyry in Sicily, Amelius in Syria, others at Ephesus, at Pergamum, and at Athens, where their disciples struggled to the last moment against Christianity. It was a noble effort of religious philosophy, and its adepts deserve respect for their pure morality. They exhibit, in certain respects, what we shall find among the Christians, — contempt of the body and of earth, divine love, union with God by ecstacy, and all the mystic ardors. This singular condition of men's minds was the moral characteristic of that age of the world, and it could end only in a religious revolution. But the Alexandrians were not destined to profit by this revolution. "You bring nothing new," they said to the Christians, "unless it be your contempt of the gods and of philosophy." They spoke truly. But it was this very contempt which secured victory to the members of the new alliance, to the redeemed of Christ. Let us turn then to the latter, since the future is theirs.¹

¹ On the school of Alexandria, see the two learned books of MM. Simon and Vacherot, and the more recent one of Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*.



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